



1 June 2016 – A new WHO report “ [Public health impacts of chemicals: knowns and unknowns](#) ” (2016) has been published.

It complements the March 2016 report “ [Preventing disease through healthy environments: a global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks](#) ”.

The new 2016 report estimates that 1.3 million lives and 43 million disability-adjusted life-years were lost in 2012 due to exposures to selected chemicals. However, data are only available for a small number of chemical exposures and people are exposed to many more chemicals every day.

Unintentional poisonings are estimated to cause 193 000 deaths annually, with the majority being from preventable chemical exposures. However, only 47% of countries have a poisons centre.

Addressing lead exposure would prevent 9.8% of intellectual disability, 4% of ischaemic heart disease and 4.6% of stroke in the population, yet many countries do not regulate lead paint.

[This report](#) provides examples of effective interventions to prevent death and disease caused by chemicals, and the economic benefits to be gained.

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