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Program on
Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors

SPRECHER
INSTITUTE
for Comparative
Cancer Research

Biomonitoring

Frequently Asked Questions

■ Question

How might biomonitoring data impact public health?

■ Answer

Biomonitoring may eventually provide data necessary to prove hypothesis about cause and effect links between hazards and health effects.

In addition, Dr. Bill Suk and colleagues from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences predicted biomonitoring may lead to: "the identification of potentially hazardous exposures before the adverse health effects appear and to establish exposure limits minimizing likelihood of significant health risks." (Suk W., Human biomonitoring: research goals and needs, Environ Health Perspect, 104 (Suppl 3):479-483, 1996)

Although it often takes many years for an adverse health effect to appear after an exposure (this can be particularly true for cancer), it's possible that biomonitoring may provide us with the information necessary to identify biomarkers for DNA exposure, for DNA damage, or for the disease itself.

Answered by: [Suzanne Snedeker, Ph.D.](#)

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