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OBESITY AND DIABETES 'WEIGH IN' TO PESTICIDES DEBATE

A new US study links organophosphorous pesticides to obesity and type 2 diabetes, said the Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA).

The peer-reviewed study, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, a journal by the US National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, investigated the effect of pre & neonatal exposure to organophosphates on hepatic cell signalling - an important metabolic development process in fetuses.

The findings of the study point out the need to explore the possibility that developmental exposure to common chemical contaminants contributes to the explosive worldwide increase in diabetes and obesity.

The study comes on the heels of research drawing links between pesticides, ADHD and cancer, reported by BFA last week. The US President's Cancer Panel in consultation with 45 experts are now calling for the government to do everything within its power to remove carcinogens and other toxins from food, air and water.

BFA Standards Convenor, Dr Andrew Monk, believes these studies are further proof of the danger surrounding pesticide exposure and the benefits of organics.

"What this continues to tell us is what in fact is common sense - that there remain many unknowns and doubts about synthetic agents and products, but also now a growing pool of evidence suggesting we should be concerned about the consumption of pesticide residues," he said.

"The cocktail effect of unknown impacts of mixtures of synthetic chemicals is another swampland of concern. Most of these permutations of mixtures have never been tested. This underlies the nature of reductive science in its approach to testing the "safety" of individual new chemistries that may be created and put into our food supply. This remains one of the many areas of unknowns."

Dr Monk believes that organic food offers people the choice to minimise the harm caused by these chemicals and pesticides.

"It comes down to consumers making a choice as to whether they wish to actively be part of a 50-year food experiment, or whether they value their health and safety sufficiently to invest in foods which are becoming confirmed as better for them. Certified organic produce gives them that choice," he said.

One of Australia's leading Accredited Nutritionists, Nicole Senior believes that the study highlights the need for further research into the theory of "fetal origins of disease" which suggests that conditions in-utero can create an "imprint" for disease later in life.

"While this study was conducted in rats and not immediately applicable to humans, it does suggest a possible mechanism whereby an environmental toxin could influence metabolic health, and points to potential risk that needs further investigation," Ms Senior said.

But in the meantime she suggests that organic foods are a good way to promote general health and well-being.

"Organic foods are a good choice for promoting our own health, the health of our children and the health of the environment," she said.

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References:

[Australian Diabetes, Obesity and Lifestyle \(AusDiab\) study 1999/2000](#)

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