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Health

100% of people have at least one type of pesticide in their body



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Researchers at the Department of Radiology and Physical Medicine at the University of Granada, have discovered the presence of at least one kind of persistent organic compound (POC's) in almost 100 percent of Spaniards they examined.

It was also discovered that women and older people had a higher amount of pesticides, fungicides and insecticides present in the body, as compared to men and

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younger people respectively.

The POC's are substances internationally classified as potentially harmful to one's health, and enter the human body through food, water or even air and get accumulated in the adipose tissue.

The study led by Juan Pedro Arrebola Moreno, calculated the level of contamination of some POC's in people from two areas, an urban one and a semi-rural one, in order to discover factors linked to such levels: diet, lifestyle, activities or residence.

387 adults, from both sexes, volunteered for surgeries in hospitals taking part in the study. After their consent, the researchers took a sample of their adipose tissue in the surgery and later the volunteers were made to appear for a questionnaire about their place of residence, lifestyle, eating habits and activities throughout their life.

After analyzing the samples, the scientists measured 6 different POC concentration levels: DDE, a principal metabolite in DDT (a pesticide used in Spain until the 80's); hexachlorobenzene, a compound used as fungicide and currently released by industrial processes; PCB's: compounds related to industrial processes; and Hexaclorociclohexano, used as an insecticide and presently used in scabies and pediculosis treatment.

The researchers concluded that 100 percent of subjects analyzed had DDE in their bodies, a substance banned in Spain, and other very frequent components such as PCB-153 (present in 92 percent of people), HCB (91 percent), PCB-180 (90 percent), PCB-138 (86 percent) and HCH (84 percent).

Moreno explained that higher levels of toxic substances were detected in women compared to men and in older volunteers compared to younger people, "possibly due to the great persistence of these substances in the environment, which results in their biomagnification in the food chain and in their bioaccumulation over time".

According to the scientists, another theory known as "Efecto Cohorte" (Cohort effect) may be behind high quantities of these substances in older people.

This theory indicated that people born in periods of higher contamination were more prone to suffer the consequences as compared to those born with the current bans on such pesticides.

Diet was also found to be an important factor in POC concentration, as the ingestion of some food materials, mainly of animal origin and high fat content, lead to a higher presence of these toxic substances in the human organism.

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"There are few studies in Spain measuring POC levels in wide samples of the population, which means that some compound levels in the general population are unknown," stated Moreno. (ANI)

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