

Spanish patients test positive for potentially toxic compounds: study

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Every single person of the 387 examined in a Spanish study had at least one potentially toxic compound, the authors reported Friday.

The bodies of every subject — patients at two hospitals in the Andalucia region in southern Spain — contained DDE, one of a group of chemicals called persistent organic compounds (POCs). Many of the compounds are hazardous to humans.

DDE, a POC, is formed when the pesticide DDT breaks down. DDT use is banned in most western countries, including Canada.

The researchers from the University of Granada tested the subjects for six POCs.

They found a range of exposures, from 92 per cent who had PCB-153 (a polychlorinated biphenyl) to 84 per cent who had HCH (hexachlorocyclohexane).

Levels were higher in women and in older volunteers, said Juan Pedro Arrebola Moreno, who designed the study.

There are few Spanish studies measuring POC concentrations in a broad sample of the population, so the study will help identify which groups are most exposed, he said.

A Canadian study in 2005 found that 11 subjects had an average of 44 chemicals, including including PCBs, flame retardants and insecticides.

Environmental Defence, a watchdog group, found 88 chemicals in the blood and urine samples of the 11 subjects.