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Wed Oct 24, 2012, 08:52 AM



Pollution as big a health problem as malaria or TB, finds report



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<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2012/oct/24/pollution-health-problem-malaria-tb>



Poisoned chalice ... Old batteries are broken to extract lead components in Kenya's Machakos district. Photograph: Tony Karumba/AFP/Getty Images

Waste from mining, lead smelters, industrial dumps and other toxic sites affects the health of an estimated 125 million people in 49 low- and middle-income countries. This unrecognised health burden is on the scale of malaria or tuberculosis (TB), a new report has found.

This year's World's worst pollution problems (pdf) report was published on Tuesday by the Blacksmith Institute in partnership with Green Cross Switzerland. It documents, for the first time, the public health impact of industrial pollutants – lead, mercury, chromium, radionuclides and pesticides – in the air, water and soil of developing countries.

"This is an extremely conservative estimate," said Bret Ericson of the Blacksmith Institute, a small international NGO based in New York City. "We've investigated 2,600 toxic sites in the last four years, we know there are far more."

The US has an estimated 100,000-300,000 toxic sites, mainly factories or industrial areas, but toxic sites in the low- and middle-income countries assessed in the report are often in residential areas. "We see a lot of disease when we go into these communities," said Ericson. "But we were surprised the health burden was so high – as much as malaria."

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3 replies	Author	Time	Post
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 And not a peep of this in the election	postulater	Oct 24	#2
 This is a huge problem that seems to fly	Chemisse	Oct 25	#3

★ **LeftishBrit** (28,394 posts)Response to [xchrom \(Original post\)](#)

Wed Oct 24, 2012, 12:06 PM

1. This is a horrible world problem. Kick for great recognition.[Back to top](#) [Alert abuse](#) [Link here](#) [Permalink](#)[Reply to this post](#)**postulater** (3,089 posts)Response to [xchrom \(Original post\)](#)

Wed Oct 24, 2012, 05:27 PM

2. And not a peep of this in the election cycle.

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Thu Oct 25, 2012, 08:55 PM

3. This is a huge problem that seems to fly under the radar.

Probably because - except in really toxic locations - it is so hard to see a direct and immediate effect on those who are in contact with them.

Some studies and a bit of publicity would go a long way toward raising awareness.

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