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Report: Industry Pollution Impacting 125 Million People Worldwide

By [Rachel Bogart](#) | Yahoo! Contributor Network – Wed, Oct 24, 2012

According to [Reuters](#), a newly-released report from [Green Cross](#) and the [Blacksmith Group](#) has concluded that pollution from factories and mines is threatening the health and lives of 125 million people in 49 low to middle-income and developing countries. Researchers from the two environmental advocacy groups say the report is the first time such an effort has been made to estimate the number of people impacted by industries because of pollution and toxic waste output.

Here are some statistics and details from the report entitled "[2012 World's Worst Pollution Problems](#)":

* The report assesses the impact of pollution in disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), which is a measure of years individuals lose in comparison to a healthy lifespan because of illness, disability, or early mortality.

* Lead-acid battery recycling industries contribute the most to pollutant-related health impacts with 4.8 million DALYs. Second is lead smelting with 2.6 million DALYs and mining and ore processing with about 2.5 million DALYs.

* The other ranked industry [pollution sources](#) include tannery operations, industrial/municipal waste disposal sites, industrial properties, artisanal gold mining, product manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, and dye industry.

* The Blacksmith Institute and Green Cross investigated 2,600 sites in developing countries like India and China, as well as several countries in South America and Africa.

* Lead-acid battery recycling is associated with lead, arsenic, and cadmium and lead has major health implications in children.

* Particle emissions from lead smelting, as well as wastewater discharge, expose people to arsenic, cadmium, lead, copper, and mercury.

* Lead was the top toxic contaminant that contributed to the highest number of DALYs (13.6 million) and it was a waste product of each industry on the report's list.

* Chromium ranked second with 3.3 million DALYs and found in eight of the listed industries, followed by asbestos with 140,000 DALYs due to the mining and ore processing industry.

* In comparison, all of the top 10 pollution sources reduce human lives collectively by more than 3 million years than malaria.

* The prevalence of toxic and harmful substance impacts on those in developing countries is due to a combination of issues that are not as common in developed countries like the U.S.

* This includes poor regulation and oversight of industries and generation of hazardous waste and emissions, the proximity of industries to densely populated areas, and the lack of knowledge about the health impacts.

* Report details also noted the steps being taken to reduce health issues and include international organizations assisting governments with information to make policy changes and clean-up efforts.

Rachel Bogart provides an in-depth look at current environmental issues and local Chicago news stories. Currently pursuing her master's in environmental science, she applies her knowledge and passion to both topics to garner further public awareness.

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