

Report 7: Create a global focal point for online environmental health databases, and seek means of linking and integrating their contents.

Convener: Philip Wexler

Brief History:

Health studies that contain environmental data are scattered worldwide. The databases use disparate methods for describing exposures and doses. The research therein tends not to be well characterized and there is no overarching ontology.

Discussion Highlights:

It would be good to look at successful models, e.g. 1. NCI Cohort Consortium – a model of pooling data from disparate epidemiology studies, 2. Comparative Toxicogenomics Database -uses a controlled ontology, although there is still a need to build the exposure portion. There is a need for environmentally relevant ontologies

Recommendation:

Convene a recurring workshop to create an inventory of databases, technologies, and environmental health relevant ontologies with the goal of integrating environmental health data and making it publicly available across studies.

Seek ways to facilitate integration. This would provide an increased ability to pool data and to analyze diverse data.

Recommend the National Library of Medicine (NLM) as a focal point from which environmental health resources can be accessed. NLM already has certain structural components in place and the ultimate structures developed could become standard.

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