

More plastic fears leached by TIME

By ACSH Staff — March 9, 2011

An alarmist *TIME* [article](#) ^[1] presents yet another dubious *Environmental Health Perspectives* [study](#) ^[2] as factual. This time, researchers purport that even BPA-free plastics can leach so-called “endocrine disruptors” into the human body. The researchers made extracts of 455 common plastic products by applying saline or ethanol to the plastics. These extracts, containing chemicals derived from the plastic, were added to breast cancer cell cultures and subsequently measured for “estrogenic activity” (EA). Seventy-percent of the products tested positive, but when put in a microwave or through a dishwasher, that proportion increased to 95 percent. *TIME* eco-writer Bryan Walsh uses this bizarre study to suggest that government and industry alike are far behind in regulating chemical safety.

ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom finds the entire study absurd. He notes “the idea that one can find a single type of biological activity across the entire spectrum of plastics makes absolutely no sense. There are quite a number of plastics, which are made up of a variety of very dissimilar chemicals. There is no way that plastics in general will target any one receptor, such as estrogen. If I got results like this, I would be very concerned about the assay, not the plastics.”

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross agrees. “I’m certain that if these ‘scientists’ tested a wide variety of substances, including commonly eaten foods, similar ‘endocrine activity’ would be found. So what? As ACSH has said many times, the amount of estrogenic substances in your body — whether you’re male or female — is many orders of magnitude greater than the minuscule amount of alleged endocrine active substances in plastics. So they can’t possibly have an effect in the real world on people’s hormone systems. Yet we read daily and see TV stories about all these ‘endocrine-disrupting’ substances.”

“Sadly, the notion that plastics can actually affect the human endocrine system has become Received Wisdom among the activists and most of the media,” laments ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan.

Mr. Walsh also mistakenly refers to ACSH as an “industry-funded lobbying group” when trying to illustrate that “industry as a whole is [not] ready to be a leader [in chemical safety].” We are asking the *TIME* editorial board to correct this error and will keep our *Dispatch* readers informed of our progress.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2011/03/09/more-plastic-fears-leached-by-time>

Links

[1] <http://healthland.time.com/2011/03/08/study-even-bpa-free-plastics-leach-endocrine-disrupting-chemicals/>

[2] <http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1003220>