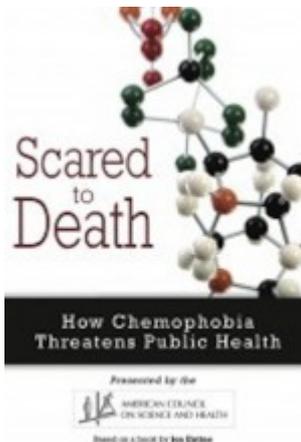


Canned threat to women's health: real threat is needless anxiety via *The Times*

By ACSH Staff — September 4, 2014



One of the *N.Y. Times* stable of scaremongers regarding common

chemicals in the environment unleashed another toxic tirade last week. Hijacking Tara Parker-Pope's *Well* column, as she is allowed to do every so often, Deborah Blum whose expertise is in science *writing*, as distinct from actual science used her Poison Pen space to attack BPA (bisphenol-A). She should be given credit for courage at least, since this chemical has resisted fringe-activist attacks from many quarters of the greensphere for a couple of decades now, and Ms. Blum's puerile nonsense can be added to the list.

In the piece, [In Plastics and Cans, a Threat to Women](#) [1], her main brief is that common exposures to the plastic hardening chemical BPA present a danger to ovarian health. Her evidence: a [study published](#) [2] in that hotbed of enviro-agitprop, *Environmental Health Perspective*, by Dr. Jodi Flaws, found that treated mice stopped producing viable eggs at an abnormally young age.

These mouse egg cell studies led to this flight of fancy: I think most scientists working today agree that BPA is an ovarian toxicant. A review of research into BPA, published this summer in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, noted that ovarian toxicity is among the most consistent and strongest effects found in both animal models and in women.

And of course, when all else fails, the author and her researcher accomplice resort to the last refuge of chemophobics everywhere, biomonitoring: In a recent study, 80 percent of the women [tested positive for BPA in urine](#) [3]. She fails to note, however, that finding trace amounts of a substance does not mean that it's toxic.

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross had this perspective: As we have said on [numerous occasions](#) [4], every scientific body worldwide that has ruled on the evidence, as opposed to the consumer concerns over BPA, has agreed: BPA does **not** pose a threat to human health at any stage of development. The anti-BPA scaremongering has made it onto our Top 10 Scares for several different years,

most recently [this past year](#) [5], and it seems to be an evergreen, a favorite attack target that no amount of scientific response will snuff out as with many other targeted chemicals and technologies.

For one example of the phony assertions in the Blum piece: I think most scientists working today agree that BPA is an ovarian toxicant, the National Toxicology Program of the National Institutes of Health [states clearly](#) [6]: "The NTP has negligible concern that exposure to bisphenol A will cause reproductive effects in non-occupationally exposed adults and minimal concern for workers exposed to higher levels in occupational settings."

Here s another: "Dr. Flaws dosed young female mice with a BPA solution at a level comparable to estimated human exposure in the United States. She then examined their ovaries..." This misrepresents what was actually done. Live mice were not dosed with BPA. Instead, ovarian tissue was removed from healthy mice and grown in ex vivo culture. The difference is important because in a living whole organism, the liver and kidneys work to inactivate and remove toxic compounds, making the actual exposures to tissues in the ovary quite low. By exposing the ovaries directly to the compound, they make it more likely to show a toxic effect.

Women of America: you are a million times more likely to protect your unborn daughters if you avoid real (or at least feasible) dangers, such as riding in an automobile without seatbelts, jaywalking, drinking alcohol while pregnant, riding a bicycle, using swings in public parks, going out of doors during thunderstorms, or even walking under ladders.

There is simply zero credible evidence that BPA, at levels anyone is likely to encounter in daily life, regardless of behaviors, presents any danger to you or your unborn child -- unless you are a lab mouse, in which case, at least some evidence exists.

We should note that we have skewered numerous other Blum Specials on these pages: for some of the most ridiculous attacks, see [here](#) [7] and [here](#) [8] for warnings about dangerous nail polish and sperm threats from plastics (at least she s trying to scare both genders!).

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Links

[1] http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/08/28/in-plastics-and-cans-a-threat-to-women/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

[2] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0041008X14000465>

[3] <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0890623813003547>

[4] <http://acsh.org/2005/01/the-facts-about-bisphenol-a/>

[5] <http://acsh.org/2014/01/top-13-health-scares-2013/>

[6] <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/ntp/ohat/bisphenol/bisphenol.pdf>

[7] <http://acsh.org/2014/01/afraid-nail-polish-says-ask-well-column-nytimes-really/>

[8] <http://acsh.org/2014/03/deborah-blum-nyt-need-chemistry-lesson-badly/>