



ECO-UPDATE
by ECO-JOURNAL



Environmental Sensitivities Awareness, Education and Action Day Walk

Environmental Sensitivities Month Recap and News from ASEQ-EHAQ

The Environmental Health Association of Quebec held its first annual walk for recognition, accommodation and services for Environmental Sensitivities on May 28th, 2011. The walk began at 1455 Blvd. De Maisonneuve West and ended at 2001 McGill College Ave., at the location of Premier Jean Charest's Montreal office. This was the first walk for Environmental Sensitivities ever held and members and supporters of the organization and its mission were excited to be part of this important event.

The month of May activities are just the beginning of ASEQ-EHAQ's plans for

the coming year. As you will see inside ECO-UPDATE the hard work and dedication of ASEQ-EHAQ's President, Rohini Peris, members of the association's board, volunteers, supporters, and sponsors has led to the advancement of several exciting projects and initiatives that we are thrilled to share with you. For example the Affordable Eco Healthy Housing Project, which has begun to take shape in the town of Mille-Îles north of Montreal and a day of awareness in Quebec City where our petition will be read in front of the National Assembly of Quebec.

On behalf of ASEQ-EHAQ, I wish you the best of health.

Sincerely,
Alana Vineberg
Editor

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ASEQ-EHAQ's petition to dedicate the Month of May as Environmental Sensitivities Education and Awareness Month in Quebec and May 12 as Environmental Sensitivities Day in Quebec will be read at the National Assembly of Quebec. You are invited to accompany ASEQ-EHAQ to the National Assembly in Quebec City for this day of awareness. Please contact ASEQ-EHAQ by September 14. Spaces limited!



Conference May 12: "Seeds of Change" From left: Michel Gaudet, Meg Sears, Dr. Richard Nahas, Sheila Cole, Judith Cohen, André Cicollela

Environmental Sensitivities Month, May 2011 Conferences

The month of May was celebrated by the Environmental Health Association of Québec with the organization of two conferences. May 12, a conference entitled Environmental Health: Seeds of Change and May 28, Toxic Trespass: Effects on Human Health. The goal of both conferences was to increase the visibility of the condition and increase awareness and public support for those suffering from environmental illnesses.

Part of the mission of ASEQ-EHAQ is to help those who have been silenced by this debilitating medical condition, to provide services to the community, and to convince governments to recognize Environment Sensitivities as a serious health condition and to establish adequate health and social services. ASEQ-EHAQ brought together experts from the scientific, medical, legal and political fields as part of this initiative to speak at both conferences.

May 12: "Environmental Health: Seeds of Change"

May 12 is Environmental Sensitivities Day. The 'Seeds of Change' conference was organized as part of ASEQ-EHAQ's awareness and education campaign. It

was held at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) as part of a week of events held at the university about human health and the environment.

The conference covered a range of topics revolving around Environmental Sensitivities. These included the biological perspective, treatment, progress in terms of recognition, health and social services (that are available in other parts of Canada and internationally), the legal precedence and rights of those affected. The following are some of the topics discussed:

Meg Sears, M Eng. (Biochemical Engineering) PhD, author of the Report on Environmental Sensitivities commissioned by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, described the large role chemicals have in our society and day-to-day life and showed the different effects they can have on the body. Sears also explained that the exposure and the level of exposure to chemicals and pollutants can affect people differently; a balance exists in the body in terms of its capability to regulate different chemicals. Sears also talked about the industry regulation and flawed chemical assessment standards. They presuppose that the level of exposure indicates the level of toxicity, when in fact there is growing environmental health literature that shows that [hormone-disrupting chemicals at lower doses can have a greater effect than at much higher concentrations.](#)

Michel Gaudet is the Vice-President and Spokesperson for ASEQ-EHAQ. He is one of the founding members of the Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides and is part of a support team that advocates and provides information for victims of Environmental Sensitivities.

Meg Sears M.Eng. Ph.D. is a researcher, scientific analyst and medical writer. She is presently an adjunct investigator with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and authored the report titled "Medical Perspective on Environmental Sensitivities," for the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Richard Nahas M.D. C.C.F.P. is an Integrative Physician from Ottawa and co-founder of the Seekers Center for Integrative Medicine. He has developed a 20 hour introduction to alternative medicine, which he teaches as a mandatory part of the medical school curriculum at the University of Ottawa.

Sheila Cole is a pioneer in the field of environmental health. In 1991, she was already teaching a course on the subject at Dalhousie University's Henson College. She is active within the Canadian Environmental Network, advisor to the board of the Nova Scotia Environmental Network and longstanding board member of the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia (EHANS).

Judith Cohen L.L.B. is a graduate of University of Montreal Law School (1967) and member of the Quebec bar since 1998. She became afflicted with Environmental Sensitivities in 2000.

André Cicollela is a chemist and toxicologist who is currently the Scientific Advisor at l'INERIS *Institut national de l'environnement industriel et des risques*. He became the first President of the Citizens Science Foundation to protect whistleblowers and to shed light on issues of science and democracy. He is also the founding President of the Réseau Environnement Santé, which brings environmental health issues to the forefront of health policy.

Richard Nahas, MD CCFP, spoke about integrative medicine and the five root causes of environmental illness that must be treated to achieve better health: toxins, physical wounds, infections, emotional stresses, and lifestyle choices. Combining the range of tools from environmental and integrative medicine yields better recovery results because it is a combination of factors that can injure a person's health.

Judith Cohen, L.L.B., provided a brief history of Quebec cases that have dealt with persons affected by environmental illnesses over the past decade, including individual rights. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms recognizes environmental illnesses as a disability and handicap that must be accommodated. She also discussed the legal obstacles one faces pursuing legal action for accommodation and/or damages. Cohen stated that the best course of action for individuals with Environmental Sensitivities who want their condition recognized is to be their own best advocate. She explained that gathering as much information and talking to as many physicians as possible about this condition will help create awareness and eventually lead to progress. Having support from Quebec physicians is paramount to successful legal action.

Sheila Cole is an environmental health advocate and award-winning environmentalist and advisor to the board of directors of the Nova Scotia Environmental Network and board member of the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia. Cole's presentation centered on advocacy and progress that has been made in having Environmental Sensitivity recognized as a medical condition and medical treatment provided in Nova Scotia. Cole spoke about the events that led up to the development of a permanent environmental health center and about creating safe environments within public and private buildings, across the province.

André Cicollela is a chemist and toxicologist and currently Scientific Advisor at l'INERIS (*Institut national de l'environnement industriel et des risques*). He is the founding president of Réseau Environnement Santé and part of a campaign that led to the banning of bisphenol A in baby bottles,

phthalates, parabens, and alkylphenols. Cicollela spoke about the progress that is being made in France and other parts of Europe to create awareness and services for environmental illnesses and about the work being done to create less toxic consumer products. Cicollela also discussed the political obstacles behind banning toxic substances and the responses that have been achieved through public policy initiatives. Presently, along with the European Network of Environmental Physicians, involving 26 countries and with the support of 240 non-governmental organizations, he is working to have the World Health Organization officially recognize Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and Electromagnetic Sensitivity in the international classification of diseases.



May 28: (Environmental Sensitivities Awareness, Education and Action Day) Toxic Trespass: Effects on Human Health

May 28 was part of ASEQ-EHAQ's Awareness, Education and Action Day for Environmental Sensitivities. John Molot MD, CCFP was the conference speaker. Explaining how chemical pollutants accumulate in the body, Dr. Molot spoke about the chemical industry, government regulation of chemicals, and how society is being exposed to hundreds of chemicals through the air, water, and food consumed. Dr. Molot focused to a large extent on air quality and pollution, demonstrating how indoor air can often be more hazardous to human health than outdoor air. He explained that the effects of the increase of chemicals humans are exposed to and that are being absorbed in the body are not yet known, but environmental sensitivities and an increase in respiratory ailments

John Molot M.D. C.C.F.P is a graduate of the University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine (71') and has been practicing environmental medicine for 24 years. During this time he attended more than 300 hours of accredited courses on environmental medicine in the United States and he has assessed and treated over 10,000 patients with multi-system symptoms complexes associated with environment-linked illnesses. He was the medical advisor on the Federal Task Force on Material Emission Standards, chaired by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and is also the medical advisor for Canadians for Properly Built Homes. Dr. Molot has represented the College of Family Physicians and provided his expert opinion to the Canadian Environmental Law Association, Health Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and more. He is also member of the Environmental Health Committee of the Ontario College of Family Physicians and staff physician at Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

and allergies are a marker of an increasing problem. Dr. Molot recommended solutions to creating healthier living spaces and environments and methods to reduce exposure to and eliminate toxins from the body through diet and exercise. He also discussed some of the obstacles of living with Environmental Sensitivities and to creating more awareness and a response from governments and physicians.

Physician and Member of the National Assembly of Quebec, Dr. Amir Khadir was also present at the conference. He spoke about the political challenges of getting this condition recognized. Ultimately, he said, it is most important to openly discuss this condition and increase awareness in society. Engaging the public to get involved will help move this issue to the forefront.

COMING SOON!

A full transcript will be available for both conferences in English and French, as well as PowerPoint presentations and audio and video recordings.

Visit: www.aseq-ehaq.ca

PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Environmental Sensitivities

Education Project

ASEQ-EHAQ is pleased to announce the development of a new education project on Environmental Sensitivities in cooperation with the *Service aux collectivités de l'UQAM*, with the participation of two professors, Rachel Cox from the University of Quebec (UQAM) and Lise Parent from TELUQ. This project is supported by the Ministry for Education, Recreation and Sports of Quebec.

The project, *Environmental Sensitivities: How do we manage this condition? Education on the biological and legal dimensions* will review and synthesize biological and legal information about Environmental Sensitivities and prepare documents and educative tools to inform the public and members of ASEQ-EHAQ about environmental illnesses.

The project will take place across the province of Quebec and will hold workshops for persons suffering with Environmental Sensitivities and their

families on how to cope with their illness and solutions to achieving better health and proper accommodation. In addition, workshops and information will also be available to the general public to raise more awareness about Environmental Sensitivities and to educate on least-toxic strategies, healthy living and prevention of environmental illnesses.

ASEQ-EHAQ is excited to be part of this project and looks forward to sharing project developments in the near future.

Healthy Housing for Environmental Sensitivities

Twenty-five acres of land have been donated in Mille Îles, north of Montreal, and ASEQ-EHAQ is moving ahead with the development of the Affordable Eco Healthy Housing Project for those suffering from environmental illnesses.

Finding safe living spaces is difficult at best and virtually impossible for people suffering from Environmental Sensitivities. Many can work if they have adequate workplace accommodation and suitable housing. If workplace accommodation is not available to them, people suffering from this condition are unable to work due to their illness, and the loss of income makes it impossible to obtain suitable accommodation. As a result, their health continues to deteriorate and many are obliged to leave their apartments becoming homeless.

ASEQ-EHAQ is working with architects and builders to closely monitor the materials used in the project to ensure that they will be safe and to develop the appropriate guides for materials and

products that are safe for use and maintenance inside the apartments.

ASEQ-EHAQ will also be offering support services, social events, educational events, and more within the project to ensure that residents have the appropriate resources to manage their condition and continue on their path to good health.

Why is healthy housing so important?

- Living in environmentally safe conditions is the first and basic requirement for enhancing recovery from environmental illnesses or Environmental Sensitivities.
- It is critical that people suffering from ES be adequately housed in order to reduce their isolation, begin to heal and once again become productive members of society.
- Individuals must find a way to avoid chemical and other harmful environmental exposures as much as possible in order for their bodies to recover.



If you are interested in registering for a place in ASEQ-EHAQ's Affordable Eco Healthy Housing project please visit: http://www.aseq-ehaq.ca/ma_wwd/wwd_hh.php or contact us for a hard copy of the registration form. Tel: (514) 683-5701

To make a donation please call or visit: <http://www.aseq-ehaq.ca/supportus.php>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

October: Conference on electromagnetic fields (EMF); information coming soon!