

# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

## CONTACT

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## Environmental Health Program

Environmental health is a branch of environmental sciences that examines the impacts of the environment on health and welfare, including quality of life. In 2004 alone, 4.9 million deaths (8.3% of world total) and 86 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) were attributable to environmental exposures (Environmental Health, 2011). Environmental health research is critical given the large populations at risk and the multitude of environmental and neighborhood factors (e.g. biological and chemical agents, the built environment, neighborhood safety, socioeconomic status, etc.) that impact populations over a lifespan.

To help decision makers to understand the complex and interconnected relationship between the environment, neighborhoods, and health, NORC established an Environmental Health program based in its Boston office. The expert staff conducts environmental health research in a number of areas including health and risk assessment, exposure assessment, environmental justice, sustainability, environmental epidemiology, and program evaluation and support. Collaborating across disciplines, the team addresses environmental health issues through a multi-faceted and comprehensive approach. Its work covers design and implementation of survey and measurement studies; development and application of tools and methods for environmental and health improvements, assessments, and program evaluation; and objective interpretation of environmental, health, and social science data using advanced analytic methods.

As part of NORC's Public Health Research department, the Environmental Health program, its partners, and its clients all benefit from NORC's long history of excellence in survey design, statistics, policy, economics, data collection, program evaluation, and information technology, as well as the organization's commitment to serving the public interest.

## Areas of Expertise

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Environmental Epidemiology | Sustainability         |
| Exposure Assessment        | Behavioral Patterns    |
| Risk Assessment            | Environmental Justice  |
| Environmental Modeling     | Community Outreach     |
| Data Analysis              | Emergency Preparedness |
| Air Pollution              | International Health   |
| Water Pollution            | Rural Health           |
| Climate Change             |                        |



## Sample Projects

**National Children’s Study (NCS) Data Linkages Program.** For the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), NORC is developing an extant data linkages program. This program is designed to identify, evaluate, select and integrate extant data sources relevant to the NCS system. Through these efforts, extant data will provide an important foundation that will help evaluate respondents’ surveys and biomedical and psychological information, improve their measurement and reduce respondent burden. Moreover, extant databases will supply key information on the personal, economic, neighborhood, and environmental characteristics of the respondent and of the communities in which they live. This information will, in turn, inform epidemiological analyses by allowing models to control for a broader list of potential confounders, examine effect modification by participant characteristics, and determine how parental and neighborhood factors relate to environmental exposures and children’s health. The Data Linkages program will help improve the efficiency and accuracy of NCS data in a timely yet comprehensive manner.

**Comprehensive Data Collection and Support Services.** For the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), NORC conducted 60 Public Health Assessments (PHA) projects to evaluate the relationship between exposure to hazardous substances and adverse health outcomes. These studies included:

- The Camp Lejeune Groundwater Supply Study in Jacksonville, North Carolina
- The Hazardous Waste Workers Surveillance Project
- The Libby, Montana Community Health Project
- The Hanford Area Follow-Up Study in Richland, Washington
- The Panel Study of Acute Respiratory Outcomes on Staten Island (Fresh Kills)
- The Otis Air Force Base Exposure-Dose Reconstruction Study
- Medical Follow-up of Immune Biomarkers in Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels
- The Wilms’ Tumor Study

## About NORC

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization headquartered in downtown Chicago with additional offices on the University of Chicago’s campus, the D.C. Metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. NORC also supports a nationwide field staff as well as international research operations. With clients throughout the world, NORC collaborates with government agencies, foundations, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision making in key areas including health, education, economics, crime, justice, energy, security, and the environment. NORC’s decades of leadership and experience in data collection, analysis, and dissemination—coupled with deep subject matter expertise—provides the foundation for effective solutions.

Learn more about NORC’s work at [www.norc.org](http://www.norc.org)

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