

Is a Health Study the Answer for Your Community?

A Guide for Making Informed Decisions

**¿Sería un estudio sobre la
salud la solución para
su comunidad?**

Una guía para tomar decisiones sustentadas

Protecting Health in Latino Communities: Spanish Health Studies Guide

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Boston University
Superfund Research Program



Outline



Why did we write this *Guide*?

Why is it critical to have the guide in Spanish?

Overview of the *Guide*

Background



BU Superfund Research Program
Community Engagement Core
e.g., community air pollution monitoring



National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS/NIH)

Why a health study guide in Spanish?

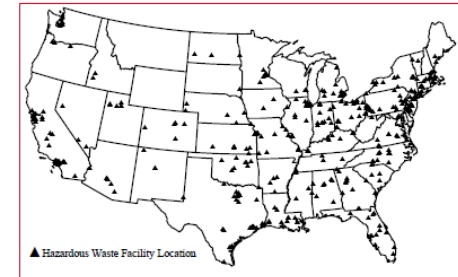


Table 4.1 – Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities between Host Neighborhoods and Non-Host Areas for the Nation’s 413 Commercial Hazardous Waste Facilities (1990 and 2000 Census)

	2000				1990			
	Host	Non-Host	Diff.	Ratio	Host	Non-Host	Diff.	Ratio
Population								
Total Pop. (1000s)	9,222	272,200	-262,979	0.03	8,673	240,037	-231,364	0.04
Population Density	870	29.7	840	29.0	820	25.1	790	27.3
Race/Ethnicity								
% People of Color	55.9%	30.0%	25.9%	1.86	46.2%	23.4%	22.8%	1.97
% African American	20.0%	11.9%	8.0%	1.67	20.4%	11.7%	8.7%	1.74
% Hispanic or Latino	27.0%	12.0%	15.0%	2.25	20.7%	8.4%	12.3%	2.47
% Asian/Pac. Is.	6.7%	3.6%	3.0%	1.83	5.3%	2.8%	2.5%	1.88
% Native American	0.7%	0.9%	-0.2%	0.77	0.6%	0.8%	-0.3%	0.68
Socioeconomics								
Poverty Rate	18.3%	12.2%	6.1%	1.50	18.5%	12.9%	5.6%	1.43
Mean Household Income	\$48,234	\$56,912	-\$8,678	0.85	\$33,115	\$38,639	-\$5,524	0.86
Mean Owner-Occpd. Housing Value	\$135,510	\$159,536	-\$24,025	0.85	\$101,774	\$111,954	-\$10,180	0.91
% with 4-Year College Degree	18.5%	24.6%	-6.1%	0.75	15.4%	20.5%	-5.1%	0.75
% Professional “White Collar” Occp.	28.0%	33.8%	-5.8%	0.83	21.8%	26.6%	-4.8%	0.82
% Employed in “Blue Collar” Occupations	27.7%	24.0%	3.7%	1.15	30.0%	26.1%	3.9%	1.15

Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty 1987—2007

**A Report Prepared for the
United Church of Christ
Justice & Witness Ministries**



Justice & Witness Ministries:
Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo
Executive Minister

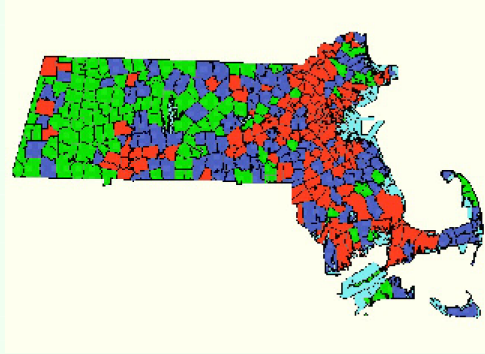
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Minister for Environmental Justice

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United Church of Christ
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UNEQUAL EXPOSURE TO ECOLOGICAL HAZARDS

**2005:
ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICES
IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**



A Report by the Philanthropy and Environmental Justice Research Project
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Released October 12, 2005

“Environmentally hazardous sites and facilities... are disproportionately located in working class towns and communities of color.”

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY
OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

October 9, 2002

...targets EOEPA resources to service those high-minority/low-income neighborhoods in Massachusetts where the residents are most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making.

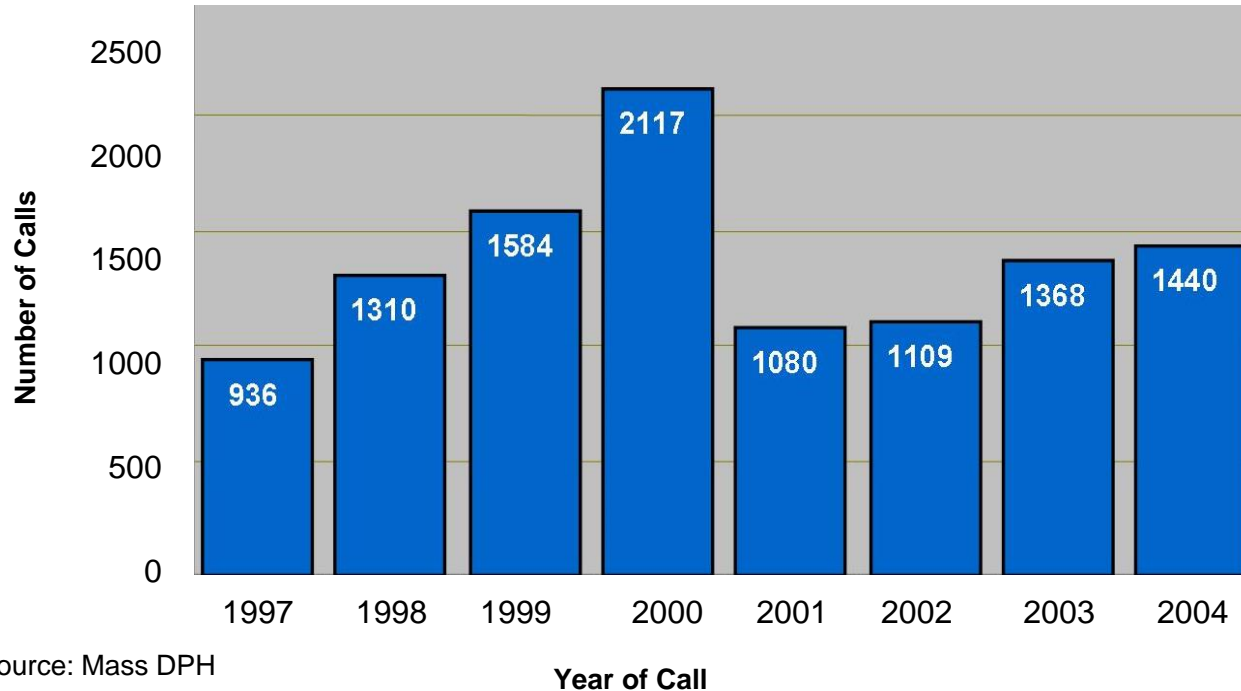
An Environmental Justice Community in Massachusetts...

...defined as neighborhoods (U.S. Census Bureau census block groups) that meet *one or more* of the following criteria:

- The median annual household income is at or below 65 percent of the statewide median income for Massachusetts; *or*
- 25 percent of the residents are minority; *or*
- 25 percent of the residents are foreign born, *or*
- **25 percent of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.**

Demand for Studies... in Massachusetts

Annual Calls Taken Regarding Perceived Environment and Disease Clusters



Source: Mass DPH

Why a health study guide in Spanish?



Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

On December 6, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.”

The “**Jemez Principles**” for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

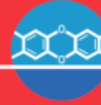
One of the key principles is:

Let People Speak for Themselves

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.*

* www.ejnet.org/ej/

Why a health study guide in Spanish?



Case in point: Holyoke campaign to retire the Mt. Tom Coal Plant lead by Latino activists.



<http://www.bu.edu/sph/health-studies-guide/>



Is a health study the answer for your community?

A guide for making informed decisions

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TERC

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What is a health study?

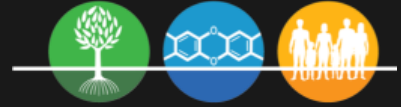


Figure 1.1 Examples of Exposure-Disease Relationships

Exposure	→	Outcome
Lead (as measured in children's blood)	→	Lower IQ and learning disabilities
Poor air quality	→	Asthma and cardiovascular disease
Certain types of pesticides	→	Nervous system disorders
Diet high in salt and fatty foods	→	Heart disease
Cigarette smoking	→	Lung cancer

An epidemiologic study (connecting exposure to outcome) is only one of the available types of community health studies.

Step 1: Why a health study?



Important to distinguish organizing **goals** from study **questions**

Motives for a Health Study

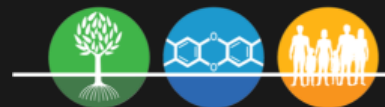


Table 1.2 Your Motives for a Health Study

A. *What do you want to know?*

That is, what is your *question or concern*?

Sample responses:

- How much soot from the power plant are we breathing?
- Is there too much illness in our community?
- Why are people sick?
- Is the mold in the school making our kids sick?

B. *Why do you want to know?*

That is, what is your *goal*?

Sample responses:

- Stop the development
- Prove we were right
- Clean up the site
- Get compensation

Step 2: Define Research Question



Studies tend to focus on these things:

Exposures

Health outcomes

Connecting exposures to outcomes

Examples



My concern is...	My study will address...	My research question is...
particulates emitted by a power plant in town	An exposure : Have we been exposed to something harmful?	Over the past 5 years, have people on the east side of town been exposed to high concentrations of airborne particulates emitted by the power plant?
too much breast cancer	An outcome : Are there more cases here than one would expect?	Over the past 10 years, does our town have a higher rate of breast cancer in women than other, similar communities do?
possible link between children's poor school performance and our town's old lead water pipes	An exposure-outcome relationship: Is a harmful exposure affecting our health and well-being?	Is lead in our drinking water responsible for the current poor performance of local children in school?

Chapter 2 Worksheet: Developing a Research Question



TOXICS
ACTION
CENTER

Chapter 2 Worksheet: Developing a Research Question

Check the boxes and fill in the blanks using the sample responses as examples.

1. Identifying your concern(s) (What):

Are you concerned only about an exposure? yes no

If yes, what exposure? _____

Are you concerned only about a health outcome? yes no

If yes, what outcome? _____

Are you concerned about a possible link between an exposure and a health outcome? yes no

If yes, what exposure? _____

And what outcome? _____

2. Who is the focus of concern?

What groups (for example, children ages 5-12, women under age 30, atomic energy workers)?

About how many people do you think are affected? A rough estimate is fine: Fewer than 100?

Step 3: Consider Possible Outcomes



Positive things a health study might do	Negative things a health study might do
<p>Document disease and/or exposure</p> <p>Demonstrate a relationship between exposure and disease</p> <p>Educate residents about environmental health concerns</p> <p>Generate media coverage and motivate the community</p> <p>Be useful for political leverage in a campaign</p> <p>Create an opportunity for members of your community to get involved</p> <p>Be useful in community efforts to protect the health of future generations</p>	<p>Document no significant relationship between a disease and exposure</p> <p>Appear to show there is no problem</p> <p>Give permission to polluters to continue polluting</p> <p>Lead to legal issues over confidentiality or lawsuits by polluters</p> <p>Be used <i>against</i> your campaign or group</p> <p>Overwhelm your organizing efforts and sap members' energy</p> <p>Generate statistics that may undermine your efforts</p> <p>Identify health problems that you are unprepared to deal with</p> <p>Delay action while waiting for results</p>

Salem, MA Story



TOXICS
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“We were hoping to find a connection between the path of the smoke and cancer in town. And we thought [the study] was going to reveal the link between the power plant and our high rates of cancer.”

-Joe, Resident of Salem, Massachusetts

“I think it is really important when these studies are created to say...‘How will [the results] be used...?’ To consider what the public perception is going to be, to look at the big picture...to think about, if it came out the way it did, it would be used against us. If I had a chance to do that with the study...I would have said, ‘Don’t do it!’”

-Erin, Resident of Salem, Massachusetts

Quotes & Stories



“No matter how good a study may be, someone will have something bad to say about it. And if it is a flawed study but people are organized, it could move mountains.”

-Dr. David Ozonoff, BU SPH

Chapter 3: A Menu of Health Studies



Tipo de Estudio -----> Resultados

(1) Mapeo

Mapeo de exposición	Mapa(s) de exposiciones
Mapeo de resultados en la salud	Mapa(s) de distribución de enfermedades

(2) Estudios de Exposición

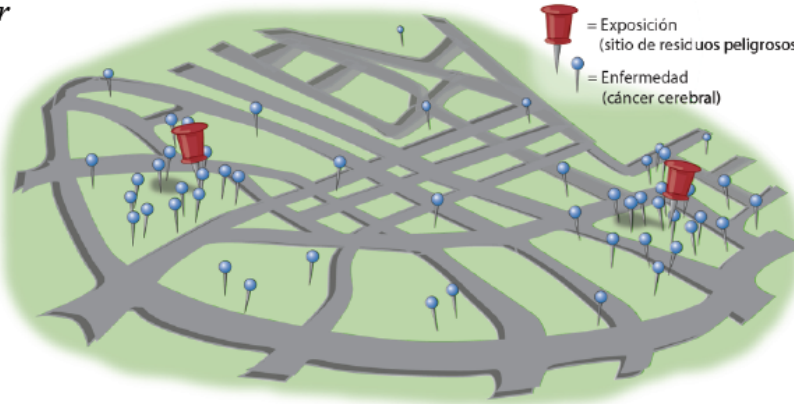
Monitoreo ambiental	Concentraciones en el medio ambiente
Monitoreo personal	Concentraciones en el entorno personal inmediato
Estudio de carga corporal (biomonitoreo)	Concentraciones en tejido o fluido corporal
Declaración de impacto ambiental	Descripción de cambios ambientales

Chapter 3: A Menu of Health Studies

¿Habrá algún patrón entre la ubicación de las exposiciones y los resultados en la salud en mi comunidad?

Así como el **mapeo** puede hacerse para la ubicación de exposiciones o de resultados en la salud en su comunidad, ambos pueden ser reflejados en el mismo mapa.

- *Las vecindades de la parte Oeste de la ciudad presentan más casos de cáncer cerebral que otras vecindades. ¿Se encontrarán también más vertederos de desechos peligrosos?*
- *¿Habrá más casos de cáncer de mama cerca de una pluma contaminante subterránea, comparado con áreas que no presentan contaminación del agua subterránea?*
- *¿Existe un mayor número de casos de mortalidad por enfermedad cardiovascular a sotavento de la planta eléctrica de carbón?*



Chapter 4: “More About Each Type of Health Study”

Chapter 4: “More about Each Type of Health Study”

Mapping

Studies of Exposure

Environmental or Personal Exposure Monitoring Study

Body Burdens and Biomonitoring

Environmental Impact Statement

Studies of Health Outcomes

Community Survey

Analysis of Disease Registry Data or Vital Events Data

Studies of the Exposure-Outcome Relationship

Ecologic Study

Cohort Study

Case-Control Study

Studies of Contaminated Sites

Risk Assessments

Public Health Assessments

HSG Guide Version 1.2 Chapter 4: More about Each Typ

There are several potential drawbacks of communi
residents who have moved away from the commun



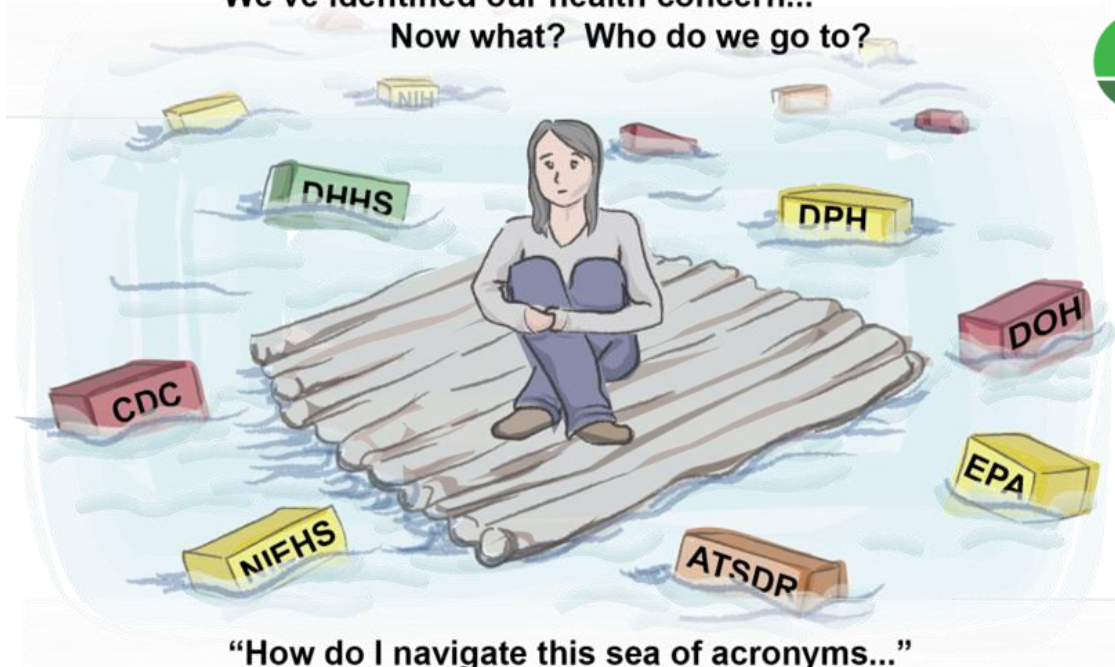
Surveys can be distributed on
paper or can be computer-based.

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Chapter 7: “Who Conducts Health Studies?”

We’ve identified our health concern...
Now what? Who do we go to?

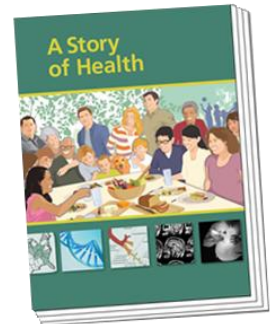
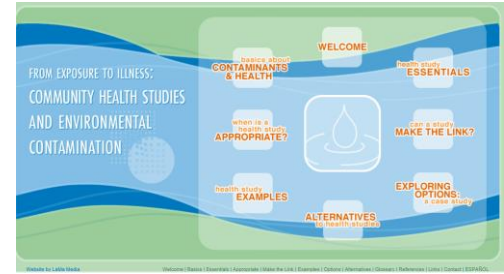


“How do I navigate this sea of acronyms...”



Complementary Resources

- [Cancer Downstream: A Citizen's Guide to Investigating Pollution/Health Connections](#), Steve Dickens, River Network
- [CommunityHealthStudies.org](#) - An interactive website introducing users to environmental health issues and study designs using case studies. *California DPH EHIB*
- [Statistics for Action](#), website with videos, activities and exercises on environmental sampling, understanding test results and data.
- [Community Environmental Health Assessment Workbook](#) – Environmental Law Institute
- [A Community Guide to Environmental Health](#), A 600+ page illustrated manual for community members, health educators and everyone in between. *Hesperian*.
- [The Story of Health](#): Interactive ebook that includes cases of asthma, leukemia, learning disabilities and environmental risk factors.



Acknowledgements



Gregory J. Howard, DSc, MPH

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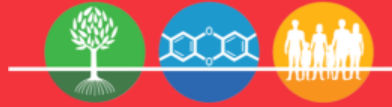
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Thank you!



<http://www.bu.edu/sph/health-studies-guide/>

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