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Environmental pollution

Environmental pollution became a matter of significant concern during the last decades. Dietary consumption of natural and chemical pollutants is considered to be primarily regulated by drinking water. Recently, the United States Environmental Protection Agency performed more than 20 million tap water tests in 45 states and revealed that it may be contaminated by more than 200 unregulated chemicals. Nitrate is an important inorganic compound that is considered to be one of the most frequent groundwater pollutants in inhabited areas. Although acute toxicity that is related to nitrate is rare, cases of neonatal hemoglobinemia have been reported in the literature; thus, leading the World Health Organization to provide recommendations regarding the optimal concentration in drinking water. It is primarily found in shallow ground water which is mainly polluted by crop fertilizers; however,

it can be also present in well water; therefore, putting into increased risk populations that tend to consume water from private wells. Long term adverse effects of nitrate consumption have been widely discussed in the international literature with conflicting evidence. In Greece, the Ministry of Environment and Energy recently identified seven vulnerable zones where nitrate pollution seems to be increased due to agricultural policies. The American College of Pediatrics suggests that physicians should inform families that inhabit regions of high environmental exposure to nitrate in order to restrict the potential adverse effects that may arise during pregnancy and the neonatal period. The present issue presents evidence in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the field of nitrate exposure from drinking water in order to provide recommendations for physicians that are directly involved in woman healthcare.

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