

Title: Assessment of indicators for use in environmental public health tracking: topics, data sources, and metrics

Key words: Selection of indicators; Use of indicators in the EPHT; Strengths and limitations of tracking data sets; Tracking of hazard, exposure and/or health outcome data

Background: The environmental public health tracking initiative is intended to improve the health of the American people by providing information about environmental factors that contribute to disease and the diseases that are caused, at least in part, by environmental factors, in forms that are useful for public health action. Environmental health indicators can be used to distill such information in ways that are understandable to lay and policy audiences, to allow for comparison of conditions in different geographic areas, and to assess trends over time.

Methods: We previously identified elements that would contribute to the development of a set of indicators useful for tracking, which include: (1) a conceptual approach to understanding relationships between environmental agents and health outcomes; (2) specific topic areas to be addressed; (3) evaluation and selection of data sources or surrogates for the data elements selected for each topic area; and (4) methods to be used to represent selected data sources in an informative way. In this analysis, we reviewed several significant sources of possible environmental health indicators, including those developed by the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists, placed these in a conceptual framework that reflects the principles of health tracking interpreted in terms of types of measurements or estimates that can be used at a national scale, compared the topic areas included in these indicator projects with those identified as relevant for the EPHTN, assessed national level data sources, analyzed applicable metrics, and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of the various approaches.

Results: The poster and associated materials will present these results.

Conclusion: Selection from among existing models for the development of indicators could contribute to the development of the tracking initiative

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