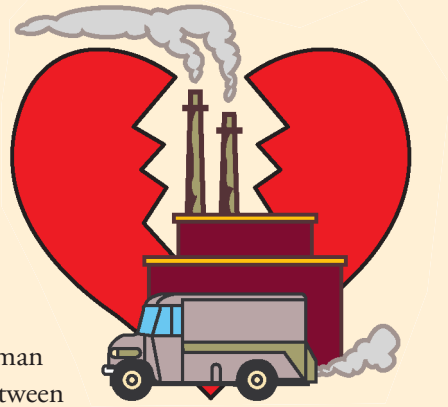
# New Directions in Environmentally Related Cardiovascular Disease



Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the primary cause of death in the industrialized world. CVD can be caused by many factors, including diet, genetics, and lifestyle. In addition, research over the last several years has made it clear that environmental factors are also associated with CVD.

Epidemiology studies, as well as animal and controlled human studies, have consistently shown an association between exposure to ambient particulate matter and CVD. Likewise, research has shown that environmental contaminants such as polyaromatic hydrocarbons can lead to changes in the vascular wall, consistent with early atherosclerotic changes that may lead to CVD.

Yet despite the large amount of research on the contribution of environmental agents to CVD, many questions still remain as to which environmental agents play a role and the nature of their pathophysiological mechanisms. Recent advances in the fields of signal transduction, genetics, molecular biology, and epidemiology make expansion of research efforts in this area very timely.

To help identify new directions for research related to this important public health issue, the NIEHS, the U.S. EPA, the American Heart Association, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute are cosponsoring a workshop titled "The Role of Environmental Agents in Cardiovascular Disease," to be held 6–7 August 2002 in Durham, North Carolina. The workshop will focus on mechanisms of environmentally related CVD and on identifying potential environmental cardiovascular toxicants. The workshop is also designed to promote collaborations among researchers in environmental health science, CVD, and epidemiology to develop novel ways to address the problem.

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