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Science

PCB's may be common in humans . . .

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), known to be widespread in fish and wildfowl, appear to be common in humans also, says Dr. Anne R. Yobs of the Environmental Protection Agency. She told a federally sponsored meeting on PCB's last month that an EPA analysis of 593 human tissue samples collected from 38 hospitals in 17 states revealed that 33.5% of the samples contained greater than 1 p.p.m. PCB and another 30.1% contained detectable quantities of PCB. Dr. Harold A. Price of the Michigan department of public health told the meeting he found that more than 41% of 80 human adipose tissue samples collected in Michigan contain more than 1 p.p.m. PCB.

. . . but levels decline elsewhere

PCB levels in two Green Bay tributaries meanwhile have dropped sharply over the past year, says University of Wisconsin water chemist Gilman D. Veith. He notes that "PCB levels in Peshtigo and Oconto river waters dropped from 0.31 and 0.45 p.p.b. respectively in November 1970 to less than 0.01 p.p.b. last summer." Dr. Veith believes that the decline is probably a direct result of Monsanto Co.'s restrictions on sales of PCB's. He adds, however, that waters of the Fox river, which flows through the city of Green Bay, have not yet shown a similar decline in PCB levels.

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