



Fact Sheet

July 21, 2006

Estimating Waterborne Disease Risks in Highly Developed Countries

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) and the Office of Water has published a series of papers summarizing the research conducted on waterborne disease in the last 10 years. The work includes research supported by EPA and others and is limited to gastrointestinal illness as the health effect of concern. The 1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments (SDWA) mandated the Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would conduct five waterborne disease studies and develop a national estimate of waterborne disease.

The EPA, CDC and other authors produced a series of papers that reviews the state of the science, methods to make a national estimate of waterborne disease, models that estimate waterborne illness and recommendations to fill existing data gaps. These papers represent the fulfillment of our SDWA requirement. The papers also represent the most comprehensive review conducted in the last 25 years and the first publication of models and their results developed to estimate waterborne illness on a national level.

A series of manuscripts will be published in the July/August 2006 supplement of *Journal of Water and Health*. The following papers will be included: 1) Assessing waterborne risks: an introduction; 2) Waterborne outbreaks reported in the United States; 3) The rate of acute gastrointestinal illness in developed countries; 4) A review of household drinking water intervention trials and an approach to the estimation of endemic waterborne gastroenteritis in the United States; 5) Estimates of endemic waterborne risks from community-intervention studies; 6) Observational epidemiologic studies of endemic waterborne risks: cohort, case-control, time-series and ecologic studies; 7) Towards a US national estimate of the risk of endemic waterborne disease - sero-epidemiologic studies; 8) Use of microbial assessment to inform the national estimate of acute gastrointestinal illness attributable to microbes in drinking water; 9) The role of disease burden measures in future estimates of endemic waterborne disease; 10) An approach for developing a national estimate of waterborne disease due to drinking water and a national estimate model application; 11) Workshop summary: estimating waterborne disease risks in the United States.

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Publications can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/nheerl/articles/2006/waterborne_disease.html