

Shrinking feeling for all males

It's a hard reality for males of all species — pesticides and chemicals have put their genitals in jeopardy.

New research shows that the chemicals used in some food wrapping, cosmetics, baby powders and flame retardants have been identified as "endocrine disrupters" because they interfere with hormones.

These "gender-benders," as a new report calls them, can affect the male species in vertebrate animals, including baby human boys, who, when their mothers are exposed to widespread chemicals in pregnancy, are born with smaller penises and feminized genitals.

"This research shows that the basic male tool kit is under threat," says Gwynne Lyons, a former government adviser on the health effects of chemicals who wrote the report published by the charity CHEMTrust, which drew on more than 250 scientific studies from around the world.

Wildlife and people have been exposed to more than 100,000 new chemicals in recent years, and the European Commission has admitted that 99 percent of them are not adequately regulated.

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