

Web report Toxicology and Environmental Health

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Website National Library of Medicine, Specialized Information System, National Institutes of Health

URL <http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/Tox/ToxMain.html>

Cost Free access and download without registration

Keywords hazardous materials, toxicology

The US National Library of Medicine's specialized information site on toxicology and environmental health provides a comprehensive cluster of links to bibliographies, databases, tutorials, and other scientific and consumer oriented resources related to toxicology and hazardous chemicals. The website includes access to resources produced by the US National Institutes of Health and by other government organizations.

The most interesting link for practitioners is the Toxicology Data Network (TOXNET®; <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov>) – an integrated system of toxicology and hazardous chemical databases. It provides access to eight major databases that contain information on the biochemical, carcinogenic, environmental, genetic, pharmacological, physiological, and toxicological effects of thousands of substances. The 'Multi-Databases' search option allows simultaneous searching of four of the eight databases. The Hazardous Substances Data Bank is probably the most relevant link for critical care clinicians because it provides details on the pharmacokinetics, pharmacology, human health effects, and emergency medical treatments (e.g. antidotes) for thousands of pharmaceuticals and chemicals.

Two interactive links are provided. Tox Town, which requires Macromedia Flash Player (downloadable from the link provided on the site), provides the general public with an introduction to chemicals and environmental health risks encountered in everyday situations. Toxicology Tutor covers basic principles of toxicology at a college student level.

This website is well organized and updated on a regular basis, and the pages are easy to navigate. To help identify specific information, a table of contents and a search tool are

found on most pages. Each page has its own URL, which facilitates book marking. The site also provides a link to Medline/PubMed.

Best feature

All information provided is well referenced with primary literature and government documents. The references are identified as peer-reviewed when applicable.

Worst feature

It is an English only website.

Wish list

The main page presents a large number of links with their abbreviated title only (e.g. Hazardous Substances Data Bank), without a description of the contents. This could be made more user-friendly for the new user.

Other links

The site provides multiple links to other toxicology and environmental health internet resources that have been reviewed by National Library of Medicine that are of recent or special interest. For example, links are provided to sites providing information on biological warfare (<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/Tox/biologicalwarfare.htm#websites>).

Competing interest

None declared.