
**PERSISTENT ORGANIC
POLLUTANTS**

*Environmental Behaviour and Pathways
of Human Exposure*

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of Human Exposure*

edited by

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For Gill and Caitlin

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Preface

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) continue to be the subject of concern amongst the public, as well as the scientific and policy-making communities. Whilst the ultimate origin of this concern is their adverse effects (both proven and suspected) in both humans and wildlife, there are other factors involved. In particular, a key feature of these chemicals is that whilst ambient concentrations in air and water present little direct hazard *via* inhalation and ingestion respectively, their propensity for transfer through the food chain means that species at the top of the ecological pyramid - including humans - can be exposed to concentrations of concern *via* their diet. Furthermore, their ability to undergo long-range atmospheric transport means that they represent a truly cross-boundary problem for mankind - a fact recognised by the international efforts being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations' Environment Programme and Economic Commission for Europe.

While the fundamental importance of research into the human health and ecotoxicological impacts of POPs is fully recognised, this aspect of POPs research (which could easily fill a book by itself) is left to other volumes. Instead, this book focuses on the sources, environmental cycling, food chain transfer, and human exposure and fate aspects of this important class of chemicals. Other topical issues are also addressed, *viz*: temporal trends in contamination; the implications of their transport to polar regions; and the significance of the former Warsaw Pact nations of central and eastern Europe as both a global reservoir and source of POPs.

The aim throughout has been to include sufficient introductory material to be of relevance to final year undergraduates, Masters and PhD students in Environmental Science/Chemistry; whilst also providing the up-to-date, detailed, and authoritative coverage required by academics, environmental consultants, and policy-makers.

As co-author of one chapter, I am only too aware of the time and effort expended by contributors to this book. I believe that that what follows does justice to their hard work, and would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to them all.

Stuart Harrad
Birmingham, July 2000