

Issue#10

Do Environmental Hormone Mimics Pose a Potentially Serious Health Threat?

Chemicals affecting human health have been a problem for the past years and have still been a growing problem for our society. Issue 10 is concerned about this problem. It is pointing out the major harms and the reasons for this problem. First, it is talking about the argument that is against these chemicals. After this, an argument that says these specific chemicals do not necessarily have an affect in human health is discussed. What I really find distrusting is the numbers and the facts given in each argument were different.

First argument gives examples and facts from experiments. The exponential growth in the industrial use and marketing of synthetic chemicals (xenobiotics) have been affecting human health greatly. Their effects were seen far from their introduction sites and their harm was great (Pg184, 1st paragraph). “Scientists also have postulated a relationship between these chemicals (endocrine disruptors) and abnormalities and diseases in humans” (page 186, 1st paragraph). Even though their argument seems based on commonsense (chemicals interrupt human systems), they do not seem to rely on scientific data very much; they seem to gather data based on their conclusion whereas they should draw a conclusion based on their data. For example they are giving examples of animals such as mice, mollusks, river fish, alligators, and some bird species and talk about how some chemicals affect their natural systems. However, humans and animals are not exactly the same and they are still uncertain about the chemicals’ effects (pg190). Sheldon Krinsky is even accepting the fact about uncertainty; “A single chemical can have multiple effects on an organism that act through several mechanisms, not all of

which involve hormone receptors”(pg189, 3rd paragraph). Complexity is another factor making this argument weak. Three reasons are given to support that it is hard to create a link between breast cancer and these chemicals in page 191, 5th paragraph. The argument also talks about policies and programs regarding these chemicals. Even though they have drawbacks the argument seems to fully support the new regulatory approach.

Using the drawbacks of the first argument, uncertainty and complexity, the second argument proposes a powerful argument. First the argument gives four reasons why we cannot directly relate chemicals and human abnormalities. Other than these specific reasons, the second argument talks about uncertainty and complexity of the procedures of detecting the effects, and using this as a strong weapon. The summary par they provide is an effective tool that we have not seen in any issue before and helps the reader to gather all the information and sub-arguments into a single argument. Nevertheless, the second argument accepts the fact that some of the chemicals disrupt the human systems however, it is too hard to get rid of them since they are an important part of our lives (pg199, 2nd paragraph).

All in all, I found the second argument more powerful. However, if prepared correctly and more efficiently, the first argument would have been much more persuasive. Lastly, I believe the second argument would be “perfect” if it provided a solution to the case instead of saying it is too hard to deal with.