

**Articles of Health Concern: *Information from the WHO Chemical Incident Alert and Response System***

On a daily basis, WHO reviews health intelligence related to chemical incidents and emergencies of (potential) international health concern, including events and precursors of events involving articles. This activity forms part of the WHO Chemical Incident Alert and Response System which consists of separate components, including an early detection and rapid alert as well as a technical assistance component. Health intelligence is gathered in a number of ways, including through the use of webcrawler systems and received from partners. The main source of information is through the Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN) which is the principle webcrawler tool used. During the four years between early 2005 and November 2008, the WHO Chemical Incident and Emergency team screened about one million news articles for chemical events that were of potential international public health significance. On average, the screening produced *2-3 signal events per day*. Out of these detected events, 66 stories concerned chemicals in articles (i.e not food or chemical products). By far the most problems related to toys, children's jewellery and other articles, including children's products (e.g. baby bottles, toilet seats) containing lead. In 2007 and 2008, 35 stories/events addressed this problem, followed by stories/events on formaldehyde in textiles and 1,4-butanediol in toys. Information on articles is usually been shared with WHO Departments, Regional and Country Offices. Country Offices, which in turn, inform national health authorities, if appropriate.