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Advanced Communication Tools and a Qualitative Research to Complement Epidemiological Study

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Background and Objective:

A qualitative research through advanced communication tools have been included in an epidemiological human biomonitoring (HBM) study in 16 municipalities of Campania Region, Italy (SEBIOREC), the area is experiencing a waste crisis and a diffuse pollution due to illegal dumping since '90.

Objectives:

Contribute qualitative insights for interpreting epidemiological data; facilitate stakeholders comprehension of meaning and implication of HBM and of environment-health relationships.

Methods:

A field research based on narrative interviews was developed focusing on: perception of pollution and its consequences on people; trust towards authorities and scientists; food consumption, change of habits and occupational and environmental exposure profile.

The study questionnaire prepared to interpret HBM included a section on risk perception and information sources (section 11).

Seminars and focus groups are in progress for supporting interpretation of HBM results.
and preparing communication tools, involving the SEBIOREC researchers. Monitoring of communication activities by a specific experts group is in progress.

**Results:**

SEBIOREC analysis of 910 blood and breast milk samples to detect dioxins and metals is ongoing. Questionnaire-section 11 analysis showed that the most dangerous perceived problems for individual exposure were: air and waste pollution (84% and 83%), industries (77%), earthquake (67%); information resulted mainly covered by National (31%) and Local TV (14%) among six multiple answers; low trust towards institutions and associations was identified.

Eighty interviews to selected representatives, for 120 recorded hours, were carried out. The results show a complex picture, where people are experiencing difficulties in establishing connections between people and environment, are losing trust in the future, are building relationships at a local level based on affectivity, are often consuming local food and water.

**Conclusion:**

Understanding risk perception and knowledge of residents in a highly polluted area, including one where illegal waste dumping is common, is crucial to properly interpret and release results of HBM studies to donors, administrators and the community.

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