

SYNOPSIS

This chapter introduces the family of environmental chemicals known as persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which include pesticides (e.g. Aldrin), some intentionally produced industrial chemicals (e.g. PCBs) and some unintentional byproducts created during manufacture of industrial chemicals (e.g. dioxins). They are characterized by their long half-life in the environment or tissues, the tendency to be transported over long distances and their ability to bioaccumulate in living organisms. Together these traits lead to wide ranging exposure potential and increasing concentrations of these compounds up the food chain (biomagnification), amplifying their toxicity, and the potential for adverse outcomes.