Brinkman, John. "Oregon's Testing of Tainted Fish is Catch as Catch Can." Portland *Oregonian*: 20 December, 2000. (Reviewed by Tracy Maloney)

This article from the *Oregonian* discusses the lack of testing being performed on the fish of Oregon's rivers and the human health effects that could result. The author states that Oregon's rivers, including the Willamette, attract more than 500,000 anglers each year. However, it is only one of 15 states in the country that chooses not to monitor its fish for chemical contaminants. The alarming result for Oregon citizens is that there is an untold number of waterways containing fish tainted by undetected toxic chemicals. The main problem addressed in the article is that there is a lack of funding to perform chemical tests. The author notes that this is ironic for a state that prides itself in maintaining a healthy environment.

A major consequence discussed in the article is the effect that the undetected chemicals could have on humans that consume the fish. The writing cites a study released last year by the U.S. Geological Survey, which reported the presence of 50 pesticides in Willamette Valley rivers, lakes, and streams. Tests performed by the *Oregonian* found a variety of toxic chemicals, including PCBs and pesticides, within the tissues of the fish. Geoffrey Grubbs, director of the U.S. EPA calls these chemicals "a serious threat to humans" and states that the awareness of consuming contaminated fish should be publicized just as much as the risk of smoking. After all, high chemical levels increase the risks of cancer, birth defects, and other illnesses. Mercury, another chemical found within some of Oregon's waterways, is poisonous to the human nervous system and is especially harmful to fetuses and small children.

Critique

This article serves as a very effective warning to anglers, and other Oregon citizens alike, that it is not safe to assume all fish are safe to eat. The author presents a very good argument concerning the current process of chemical detection within fish tissues. Due to a lack of funding, tests on Oregon's fish are not performed until it is thought that there is a problem. Rather than working on preventing fish from being exposed to harmful chemicals, the state is working after the problem arises- at times that could be too late, requiring an even greater amount of funding.

The article is very coherent and captivating. Being published in a public newspaper, it is an easy read and it not restricted to an audience with a scientific background. From a reader's standpoint, I can think of no limitations or fallbacks within this article. It pertains to a very important issue that should concern all Oregonians; the author is effective at relaying this message.

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