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Pediatric Environmental Health: From Global Threats to Clinical Practice

Children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental hazards because of their developing organs, higher intake of air, water, and food per kilogram of body weight, immature detoxification pathways, and behaviors that increase exposure to dust, pollutants, and chemicals. Air pollution, climate change, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals are now recognized as major determinants of child health, contributing to respiratory disease, adverse birth outcomes, neurodevelopmental risk, and preventable morbidity.

This lecture argues that pediatric environmental health is one of the most urgent and overlooked health challenges of the 21st century. Designed for pediatricians, it connects global threats with daily clinical practice and presents practical tools for action: rapid environmental screening with the Green Sheet, the pediatric environmental history, consultation with Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, and nature prescription through the PACE strategy — Participate with families, Anticipate barriers, Plan concretely, and Embed nature into daily routines.

The goal is to motivate pediatricians to integrate environmental health into routine care, not as an additional burden, but as a core component of prevention, asthma care, neurodevelopmental follow-up, nutrition, and family counseling. By asking better questions about where children live, what air they breathe, what water they drink, and what exposures surround them, clinicians can move from treating symptoms to identifying hidden environmental causes and protecting children's futures.

Keywords: pediatric environmental health; air pollution; climate change; endocrine disruptors; environmental history; prevention; PEHSU; nature prescription.

Biography

Dr. Cristian César Alderete Ayala is a paediatrician, Medical Advisor, and Scientific Consultant based in Barcelona, Spain, with extensive experience in medical affairs, clinical research, and healthcare innovation. He has collaborated with leading pharmaceutical, nutrition, and healthcare organisations, including Ferrer, Ordesa, Casen Fleet, and Nestlé, as well as global consulting firms such as IQVIA, L.E.K. Consulting, Atheneum, and Guidepoint, providing strategic scientific and medical expertise across a broad range of healthcare projects.