

Faculty Examination Prep Series – Environmental Health Questions

Question 1

You are a public health physician working at a regional public health unit. Today, media are reporting a story about an elevated number of cancer cases among people connected to a local school. The story reports people have several different types of cancer. The minister has asked for the issue to be investigated.

How would you go about investigating this cluster? (70%)

What particular communications issues will you need to address? (30%)

Question 2

You are a public health physician working at a metropolitan public health unit. A local community group has undertaken testing of backyards in an inner city suburb for lead. One area was found to have elevated levels of lead. The group found that these houses were built on land that was previously a rail yard where train carriages were stripped and repainted.

How would you go about assessing the human health risk for the lead levels? (70%)

How would you communicate with the local community? (30%)

Question 3

You are a public health physician working in a regional public health unit. A recent investigation into a former fire department training site has found contamination with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). This has spread beyond the site and into the surrounding suburb.

Outline how you would assess the health risk of this to the local community, manage the risk, and communicate the risk to the community.