

Viewpoint: George Washington University School of Public Health and anti-pesticide economist Charles Benbrook caught in ethics breach

A recent public release from a graduate student at George Washington University claimed insights from old data answers new questions in newly published research. These new insights claimed they found “high” herbicide exposures which were associated with serious negative health outcomes in women and children – extraordinary and serious claims from a prestigious institution published in a peer-reviewed journal.

However, a review – that both the institution and publisher should have done – shows bias, undisclosed conflicts, clear violations of institutional and publishing ethical standards, and lack of evidence as the hallmarks for these claims. This research does raise new questions – questions for George Washington University and the journal *Environmental Health*.

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Benbrook’s reputation has yet to recover from Washington State University’s decision to terminate his last academic contract in the wake of the revelation that Benbrook’s research was solely funded (without disclosure) by organic food industry interests who also happened to be clients of Benbrook’s for-profit consulting firm. In this new GW study, Benbrook fell into old habits.

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Advocacy masquerading as science — denying the findings of both EPA and CDC — is par for the course with Mr. Benbrook and his pesticide litigator and organic industry clients. George Washington University and the *Environmental Health* journal need to investigate this matter if they wish to preserve a reputation for academic integrity and transparency.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here