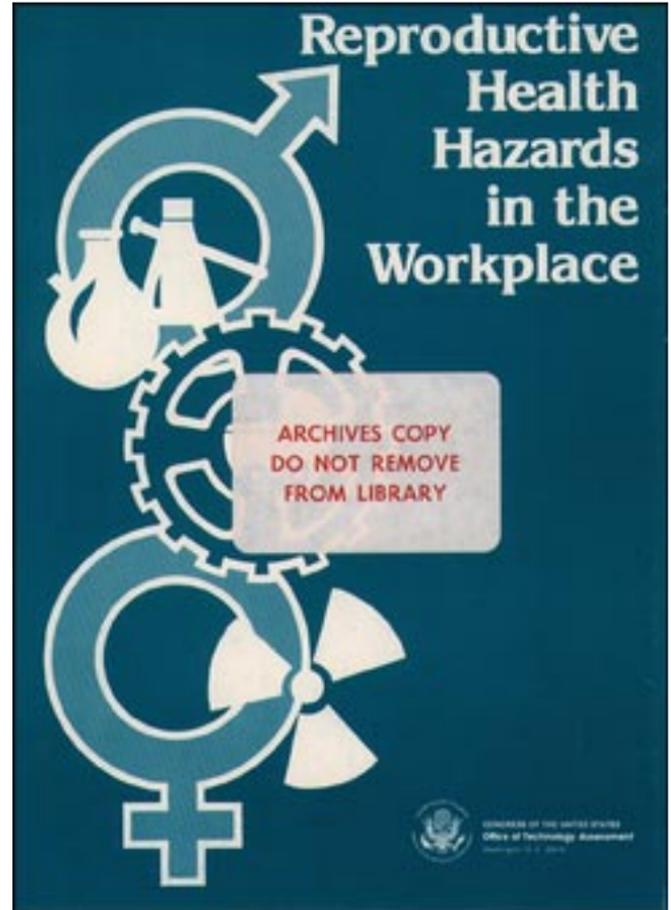


*Reproductive Health Hazards in the
Workplace*

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Foreword

This report reviews current knowledge of hazards and suspected hazards *to* the reproductive health of America's working men and women and to the health and well-being of their children. The analysis was requested by the House Committee on Science and Technology, with letters of support from the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, and the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture.

The nature and actions of the chemical, biological, and physical factors that may cause reproductive or developmental impairment are described, as is the complexity of measuring reproductive endpoints. The first section reviews current technologies for assessing reproductive function, and examines the human and animal studies conducted to determine the extent of risk posed by suspected agents and the difficulties in interpreting study findings for this purpose.

The report then reviews the role of the regulatory process in preventing workplace exposure to reproductive health hazards, and the legal redress from either State workers' compensation systems or the tort system that is available to those affected. This section also analyzes sex discrimination issues arising from the fact that protection policies instituted in hospitals and industry have, in certain instances, discriminated against women workers. The third section discusses the ethical principles underlying the protection of reproductive health in the workplace.

The Office of Technology Assessment was assisted in the preparation of this study by an advisory panel of individuals selected to reflect both the substantive issues and the relevant social issues covered in the assessment. Panelists were drawn from academia, industry, trade associations, public interest groups, and labor unions. Their areas of scientific expertise included reproductive and developmental toxicology, male and female reproductive biology, and epidemiology. Legal interests included sex discrimination, workers' compensation, tort, and regulatory law. Eighty-nine reviewers drawn from universities, trade associations, the executive branch, and the private sector provided helpful comments on draft reports.

The Office expresses sincere appreciation to each of these individuals. As is the case with all OTA reports, however, the content of this report is the responsibility of the Office and does not necessarily constitute the consensus or endorsement of the advisory panel or the Technology Assessment Board.



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Note: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The views expressed in this OTA report, however, are the sole responsibility of the Office of Technology Assessment.

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