

SECOND EDITION

Understanding Environmental Health

How We Live in the World

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Chapter 1: A Preview of Environmental Health

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What is environmental health?

- People and the environment
 - Scientific reality: humans are just one player in ecosystems and in the global environment
 - Public health perspective: hazards to human health are core concern

- Core concerns of environmental health
 - Focus on chemical, physical, biological hazards
 - Interactions with genetic traits and with social/behavioral stressors
 - Emphasis on anthropogenic hazards
 - Much more than just pollution

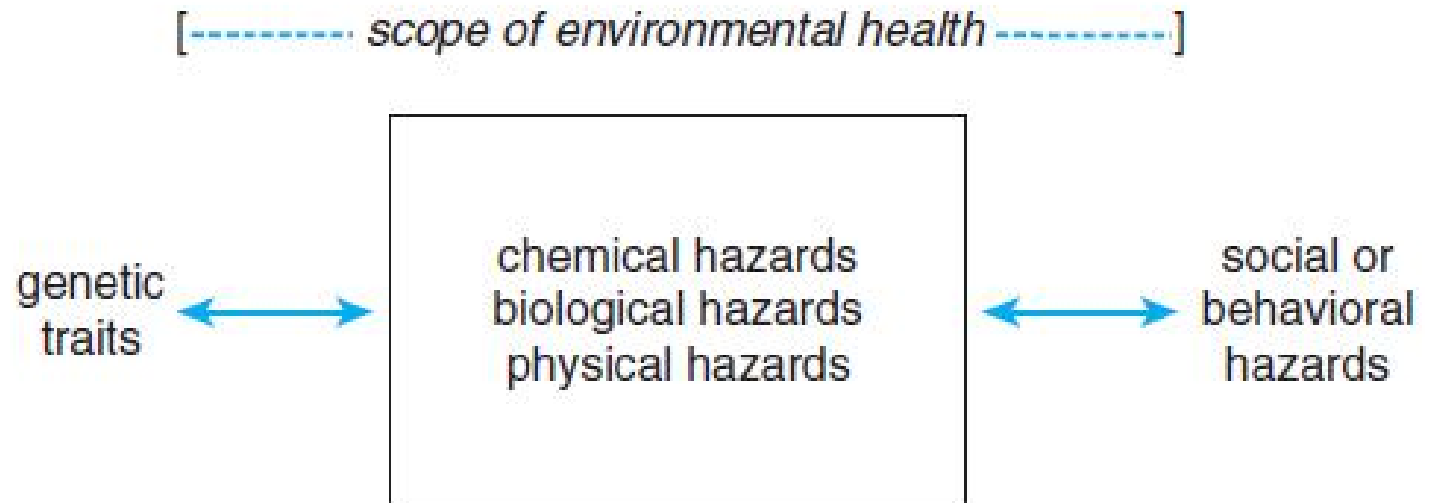


FIGURE 1.1 The scope of environmental health.

Key Themes of this Textbook

- We make the world we live in, and we live in the world we make.
- People living a modern Western lifestyle create, use, and dispose of *lots* of “stuff.”
- In an ecosystem, nothing ever goes away.¹
- Therefore, our “stuff” and its byproducts are transported and transformed, but they do not disappear.

- There has often been a lack of foresight in adopting new products and technologies.
- The natural environment is globally connected; and trade and travel are increasingly globalized.
- Global disparities in development and health are enormous.
- Western-style development is not sustainable at a global scale.

¹Commoner, B. *Making Peace with the Planet*. New York, NY:
Pantheon Press, 1990.