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Science in society: Towards receptor-oriented integrative risk governance in artificial turf risk case

Science-centered policy is limited in dealing with complicated environmental and health issues that embrace a wide range of individual variability and diversity of socio-cultural as well as physical conditions. Among many individuals in society, children and infants are particularly the most vulnerable and sensitive group to chemical exposures because they are on developmental stages mentally as well as physically. Nevertheless, our society is not likely to conduct enough protection behaviors for them since the most environmental health risk tends to have long-term consequences and perceived as insignificant. Arguable cases of artificial turf also require analyses of environmental and health risk at various levels and dimensions. However, there are always insufficiency of scientific evidence subject to data and statistical outcomes in reflecting realistic risks linking among stressors, exposures to receptors, and their health impacts. Beyond scientific numbers, I argue that it is necessary to collect and analyze dialogues associated with multifaceted aspects of the risk to vulnerable risk receptors, in particular, children who everyday play and often hit the ground. Such risk dialogues presented by the media and posted on the internet are likely to increase risk perceptions of large numbers of population and lead them to have conduct precautionary and

protective behaviors to their children. By exploring artificial turf risk cases and public responses to the risk in the U.S. and South Korea, I argue the need of a receptor-oriented and integrative risk governance model in assessing and managing the risk. The receptor-oriented approach let decision-makers more focus on vulnerable population. I addition, the frame of integrative risk governance allows to involve larger numbers of responsible risk performers who are able to manage and communicate the risk desirably in the society.

Speaker Biography

Seohyun Park has completed her PhD in August, 2008 from State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, USA, with the area of study, environmental systems and risk management. She is currently working as a visiting researcher and a lecturer in Chonbuk National University, South Korea. As to her interdisciplinary academic background, she has made an effort to communicate science in society, in particular, with the subjects of environmental problems and chemical risks. She has published papers and engaged in research subjects regarding chemical safety management and risk communication, social and cultural aspects of environmental health and toxicology, climate change adaptation strategies of health, Radon risk communication, and development of public response systems in chemical emergency. She has particular attention to education and risk communication which enhance desirable risk perceptions, appropriate decision-making, and behaviors. This social mechanism eventually achieves social goals.

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