

2009 Winter Symposium Review

by Ryan Weidling

The Genetic and Environmental Toxicology Association's Winter 2009 afternoon symposium was held at the Elihu M. Harris Building on March 3, 2009. The topic was "Children's Health—Protecting Our Future," and a wide range of topics illustrated exciting and emerging areas of research into children's health.

Dr. Anand Chokkalingam, adjunct assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health, presented his research on genetic risk factors for childhood leukemia. He spoke about ongoing research within the Northern California Childhood Leukemia Study, a large population-based case-control study aimed at understanding the genetic and environmental factors of the most common childhood cancer. Dr. Chokkalingam's presentation illustrated the use of cutting-edge genetic and genome sequencing methods on a very important topic.

Dr. Amy Arcus-Arth, Staff Toxicologist with OEHHA, presented on melamine toxicity in pet food, infant formula, and other products. Her presentation illustrated the importance of considering chemical mixtures and metabolic byproducts when understanding susceptibility and risk of melamine and other xenobiotics. Dr. Arcus-Arth's presented on a timely topic that has garnered headlines in recent memory and offered a more in-depth understanding of the subject.

Dr. Martha S. Sandy, Chief of the Cancer Toxicology and Epidemiology Section of OEHHA, presented her research on *in utero* and early life susceptibility to carcinogens. Her research involved synthesizing previous toxicological bioassay studies with the aim of deriving measures of early-life susceptibility. Dr. Sandy's work illustrated the variability of cancer incidence for early-life exposures across chemicals, gender, and animal models.

Dr. Janice Kim, Public Health Medical Officer for the Infectious Diseases Branch of the California Department of Public Health, spoke about the effects of traffic pollution on childhood asthma and lung development. She was the lead author on the OEHHA study "Traffic-Related Air Pollution Near Busy Roads: The East Bay Children's Respiratory Health Study," and her talk illustrated the methods and outcomes of this work. Dr. Kim's research implicated exposure to traffic pollution as a risk factor for asthma, and raised questions of which chemical components of the emissions are responsible.