



Research & Development Highlights

Technical Series
90-210

Survey of the Medical Impact on Environmentally Hypersensitive People of a Change in Habitat

Introduction

This study is a complement to the more extensive study, *Housing for the Environmentally Hypersensitive: A Survey and Examples of Clean-Air Housing in Canada* (see Research and Development Highlight 90-208). It investigates the medical history of 29 people drawn from the same sample that formed the basis of the more extensive study.

The study also reviews the phenomenon of Environmental Hypersensitivity Disorder and the current medical debate on the subject.

Research Program

Of the 34 questionnaires sent to a selected group of subjects included in the major study, 29 responded, many with extensive and detailed information. Some telephone interviews also were conducted.

Findings

It should be noted that interpretation of the findings must take into account the non-random nature of the sample.

- Only one person from the sample considered the health benefit experienced from a change to a more healthy living environment to be somewhat or not important. All other subjects indicated the change was either very important or important to improving their health.
- Subjects had experienced a very large array of different treatments and the majority had consulted at least five physicians about their medical condition.
- Respondents indicated they were also sensitive to particular foods.
- A large variety of factors are identified that the respondents believe contributed to their illness. What happens at home is only one of six categories. The others include work place, outdoor pollution, medical condition, medical treatment and miscellaneous.

Because the sample is too small to be significantly different, the findings should not be considered conclusive. Neverthe-

less, the study adds validity to the need and effectiveness of clean housing for this group of disabled people.

Project Manager: Peter Russell

Research Report: A Survey of the Medical Impact on Environmentally Hypersensitive People of a Change in Habitat (1990)

Research Consultant: Dr. SR. Barron, MD.

A full report on this research project is available from the Canadian Housing Information Centre at the address below.

Housing Research at CMHC

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