

# **Environmental Side Effects of Medication**

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We will probably all use pharmaceuticals at some stage in our life. Following use, pharmaceuticals and their metabolites are excreted into the sewage system and can then pass through sewage treatment plants into surface waters. The compounds can also enter the soil environment when sewage sludge is applied as a fertiliser to land. As pharmaceuticals are biologically active molecules, in recent years there has been increasing concern from scientists and the general public over the potential impacts that pharmaceuticals that are released to natural environment have on ecosystems and human health. This presentation will present an overview our understanding of the risks of pharmaceuticals in soils and surface waters to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife and humans. Major knowledge gaps in our understanding of the impacts of pharmaceuticals on the natural environment will be highlighted and an ongoing initiative, involving the European pharmaceutical industry, research community and regulatory organisations, to address some of these knowledge gaps will be presented.