

## E-Waste Management Practices and Perception about its Health Hazards

Sir,

E-waste is the fastest growing waste in the solid waste stream.<sup>[1]</sup> As per E-waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011, e-waste includes electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) (e.g., laptops, computers, mobile phones, TVs, DVD players, mp3 players, etc.) either in whole or in part, which is discarded as waste by consumer or bulk consumer and the ones which are rejected by the processes such as manufacturing, refurbishment, and repair.<sup>[2]</sup> Globally, about 50 million tons (MT) of e-waste are generated each year, with an average annual growth rate of 4–5%. India is the fifth largest producer of e-waste and the third largest in Asia.<sup>[3]</sup> Besides, India has also become a hotspot for e-waste dumping by developed countries. Despite the rising burden of e-waste, only 20% is collected and recycled properly. The fate of the other 80% of e-waste remains undocumented.<sup>[4]</sup> The situation is even gloomier in India which is primarily due to poor awareness in consumers and scrap dealers and weak enforcement of environmental regulations.<sup>[1]</sup>

Improper disposal of e-waste adversely affects the environment and human health.<sup>[5]</sup> Advances in technology made a huge impact on society and enhanced our connectivity across the globe. The widespread use of electronic items has made communication easier, enhanced business activities, and offered employment opportunities. Although we enjoy the luxury of advancement in technology, we are not aware of the rising problems of e-waste. The burden of e-waste poses numerous challenges to society in terms of adverse human health and the environment.

Hence, the trends in consumption and production processes of electronic equipment are unsustainable and pose threat to the environment and human health. Optimal and efficient use of natural resources, minimization of waste, development of cleaner products, and environmentally sustainable recycling and disposal of waste are some of the issues which need to be addressed by ensuring economic growth and enhancing the quality of life. Such predictions highlight the urgent need to address the problem of e-waste in developing countries like India where the collection and management of e-waste and the recycling process are yet to be properly regulated.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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