

What is CREAL?

The Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (CREAL) was established in 2005 as a collective initiative by the Generalitat of Catalonia (Department of Health and Department of Innovation, Universities and Enterprise), the Institut Municipal d'Investigació Mèdica (IMIM-IMAS), and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF). This Center is part of the environmental epidemiological line of research promoted initially by the Environmental Respiratory Research Unit of IMIM.

The Center's research team, lead by Dr. Josep Maria Antó, has significant experience in the research and consultancy of information systems, environmental risk evaluation, and crisis management, as well as in training methods of environmental epidemiology and knowledge management.

CREAL works in three research areas:

- Respiratory diseases
- Cancer
- Child health

In the field of **respiratory illness** prevention, the Center concentrates on the environmental factors related to the occurrence of illnesses such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Also, the Center studies job-related risks linked to the occurrence of these illnesses, as well as the interaction between genetic and environmental factors. This line of research has a particular focus on the respiratory consequences of prolonged exposure to cleaning products, a theme closely related to **the report published by *The Lancet*** on July 28.

In addition, CREAL's **cancer research** is centered on the environmental factors related to bladder cancer, for example the effects of the contaminants in potable water. The Center also partners with researchers within Spain and various European countries to study the connection of workplace environments to other types of tumors.

Finally, in the field of **child health**, the Center researches the impact of different contaminants on the wellbeing of children. Research focuses on the impact of pollution, water contamination, and foods on child growth, both in the intrauterine phase and after birth.

A key objective of CREAL is to combine the theory of research with the practice; as such the knowledge acquisition stimulates **health and environmental policies** that reduce the incidence of illnesses caused by environmental factors and improves the **quality of life** of the affected population.