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## 'Lead toxicity not just a health issue but an economic burden too'

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**LUCKNOW:** Lead toxicity is not just a health issue but also an economic one due to the cost of treatment that comes with poor health, said experts at the day-long "Symposium on Lead Poisoning Prevention and Awareness" organised by the department of Biotechnology, Era University, in association with Indian Society for Lead Awareness & Research (InSLAR) on Saturday.

Lead toxicity is usually caused by exposure to contaminated air, water, or soil. Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings have been found to be common sources of lead poisoning in children. This exposure to lead can lead to anaemia, hypertension, renal impairment, immunotoxicity, and even death.

"When lead toxicity causes illness the treatment is a prolonged one. As it is not known which organ will be damaged by lead toxicity, the cost of treatment changes for each case. Also, the treatment cost varies according to the age of the patient. Thus, lead toxicity is not just a health issue but an

economic one too," said Professor AA Mahdi, head of biochemistry at King George's Medical University (KGMU), a speaker at the event.

In a similar vein, professor Thuppil Venkatesh, one of the pioneers in the country who started lead awareness campaigns, laid emphasis on the need for developing countries to create lead awareness continually to protect our subsequent generations from the disease caused due to lead toxicity.

During the event, speakers also discussed the toxic effects of lead and various recommendations for the reduction and prevention of lead poisoning. The symposium was organised as part of "International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week" observed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) every year in the last week of October.

The focus of this year's campaign is "Say no to lead poisoning". The basic aim of the WHO in organising this program is to remind governments, civil society organisations, health partners, industry, and others about the unacceptable risks of lead exposure and the need for action.