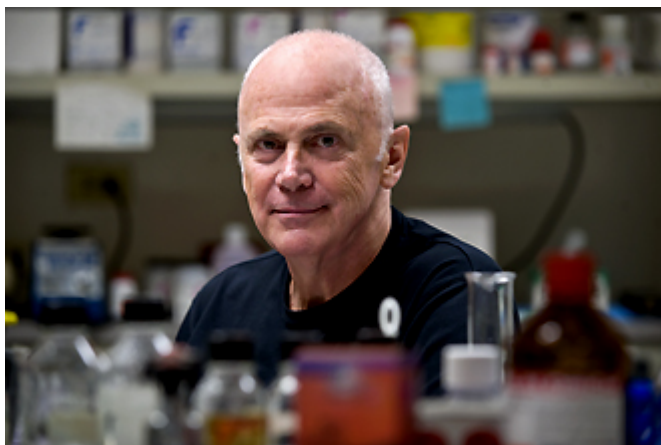


Hot Issue: Hormone-Laced Pollution

October 19, 2009 11:45 AM Keith Brannon

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Hormones from plastics, pesticides and even common prescription drugs are seeping into waterways and having unintended consequences on wildlife, says environmental studies professor John McLachlan.



Professor John McLachlan is organizing a four-day conference that will examine long-term consequences of hormones in the environment. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

A recent report found that one third of small-mouth bass were feminized in nine major U.S. river basins, and almost all of the waterways tested contained some hormonally active chemicals.

The long-term consequences of hormones and endocrine disruptors in the environment is the focus of the Tenth International Symposium on Environment and Hormones (E.hormone 2009), a four-day conference opening on Wednesday (Oct. 21) that will bring together leading hormone experts from around the world.

"It is one of the hottest topics in environmental biology right now," says McLachlan,

director of the [Tulane/Xavier Center for Bioenvironmental Research](#), which is hosting the conference.

Researchers will discuss how hormones affect the body and endocrine system and how they may play a role in diseases like breast cancer. There will be several sessions about DES (diethylstilbestrol), a synthetic form of estrogen linked to increased cancer risks.

The conference also will feature a session by "green chemistry" expert Terry Collins, who is leading efforts to get companies to design chemicals that break down without harming the environment. There is also a session about Bisphenol-A ? a common chemical in plastic food containers and bottles ? and its potential links to Type II diabetes and obesity.

Registration for the [conference](#) at the Pere Marquette Hotel in downtown New Orleans costs \$450 for members of the public or \$300 for students. Day passes are available for \$200 or \$125 for faculty members of Tulane or Xavier universities. Members of the public can attend one individual session of the conference at no charge, but they must register if they attend multiple sessions.