

**A Brief Introduction to:
Health Effects of Exposure to Cyanobacteria Toxins: State of the Science
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The conference entitled “Health Effects of Exposure to Cyanobacteria Toxins: State of the Science” took place on August 13th to the 14th, 2002 in Sarasota, Florida. The conference was sponsored by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Funding for the conference was provided, in part, through a Cooperative Agreement (U50/CCU415409-05-5 Cooperative Agreement for Pfiesteria-Related Surveillance and Prevention).

Cyanobacteria and their potential impact on human health is an emerging public health issue that has received increasing scientific interest resulting in new and ongoing research. While it has been substantiated that cyanobacteria produce toxins that are potentially capable of causing disease in humans, many questions remain unanswered regarding the identification and quantification of cyanobacteria and cyanotoxin in the environment and to what degree cyanobacteria found in the environment translates into risks to public health.

The vision for this conference was to bring together leading scientists and public health officials involved with the emerging issues of cyanobacteria to share the latest information and research findings. The conference was a success in this regard in that participating presenters included state, national and international researchers and agencies involved with studying and addressing issues regarding cyanobacteria and their toxins.

The presentations were organized into a framework consisting of three panels, the scope of each being specifically focused. The first and second panels took place on August 13, with a presentation at the Mote Marine Aquarium following the second session. The last panel, along with a tour of a water treatment facility in Manatee County, Florida, took place on the 14th of August.

The initial panel of the conference addressed the issues associated with cyanobacterial and other algal blooms in Florida. Dr. Karen Steidinger, who is the Task Force Chair of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at the Florida Marine Research Institute, moderated this first panel. The focus of the second panel encompassed the national and international perspectives on cyanobacterial exposures. The moderator for this panel was Dr. Lora Fleming, from the University of Miami. Mr. Bart Bibler, a professional engineer, was the moderator of the third panel. This final panel addressed federal, state and local agency activities, primarily the laboratory testing of water supplies, associated with cyanobacteria.

Dr. Alan Rowan and Dr. David Johnson, affiliated with the Florida Department of Health, organized and welcomed the attendees to the conference. They also outlined the schedule of events, including the order of presenters for the three panels.

This monograph is a compilation of the presenter manuscripts, figures and related informational materials that represent the material presented at the conference. For one presentation, where the presenter did not provide a manuscript, a brief summary of the presentation is provided.

The material information and opinions in this manuscript are those presented by the individual presenters and does not necessarily represent the position of the FDOH, CDC or the University of South Florida. Furthermore, the individual presentations have not been edited or endorsed by the FDOH, CDC, or the University of South Florida. Technical editing and formatting of the monograph was provided. The scientific content and opinions presented herein are those of the individual presenter.

It is the intent that scientists, researchers, government agencies and others will use this monograph as a source of recent research findings and that it be available for those who were unable to attend the conference.

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