INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK

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Recent reports have drawn attention to the problem of contamination of human milk by environmental pollutants, and the potential adverse effects of these pollutants on breast-fed infants.

Of particular concern has been the contamination of milk by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organophosphorus compounds (OP).

The growing awareness of this problem has raised increasing questions about the possible risks of breast-feeding and about the advisability of nursing mothers, having their milk tested for polychlorinated biphenyls and organophosphorus compounds.

Clearly, there is a pressing need for practitioners to have current data on contamination of human milk by environmental pollutants, such as insecticides, so that we can make informed recommendations to pregnant women and nursing mothers about the testing of breast milk and about breast-feeding.

This thesis discusses breast feeding and breast milk testing in the light of recent findings of insecticide contamination of human milk, and attempts to answer the questions regarding mothers who are currently unaware of, or not concerned by breast milk contamination: Should we draw their attention to the potential risks of breast feeding in such conditions ?