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SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF PASSIVE POLLUTION BY ASBESTOS IN DARABANI TOWN, BOTOȘANI COUNTY, ROMANIA

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Abstract

Social perception is a tool widely used in the environment research, due to the emphasis put on the one hand on the human component, as an important factor in the development of society, and on the other hand on the man-environment interaction of the past decades. The aim of the present study is to assess the population concern about the environment, and particularly about the use of asbestos (a material partly forbidden in Romania since 2007), for construction purposes. The case study, Darabani town in the Botoșani County, was chosen because about one fourth of the households are roofed with asbestos cement sheets. The investigation methods consisted in making an inventory of the houses covered by asbestos sheets and in administering a questionnaire to 500 residents, focused both on the perception of the environment and on asbestos use. The survey data were processed in SPSSv.17©, using Chi and Kruskal-Wallis tests. The answers were analyzed by relating the perception of the environmental problems identified in the field with the age, education level and incomes of the local community, which allowed us to highlight some statistical differences among the various groups. The results showed that the population was concerned about the environmental problems, but less concerned about asbestos use, except for the people with higher education or having high incomes. In brief, most residents ignored the fact they lived in an asbestos polluted environment.

Key words: asbestos, Darabani town, environment, human settlements, perception, Romania

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