

The Mineral Commodities and Health

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Human society, in its incessant quest for better living conditions, has been building its capacity to use various raw materials. The impacts provoked by the mineral commodities on human health can be analyzed within the frame of reference of natural space and the geographic-economic spaces set aside for industry, final consumption and pos-consumption.

1. Natural

Soil, rocks, air and water are basic constituents of the physical space around us. Rain, heat, cold, volcanic emanation and biological actions or organisms and human society, within other factors, operate over that space, modifying and transforming natural conditions through the time.

2. Industrial

Mineral substances of economic interest occur in most of the cases in low proportions on rocks, being a necessity the movement of a great quantity of raw material to the installations of concentration. Accidents and diseases related to each one of those operations are known since Antiquity.

3. Final consumption

There are uncountable examples of mineral commodities which exploitation had provoked dangerous and not so dangerous problems on the population's health. For example, the radioactive substances present in the mines; the fibres of friable asbestos applied in the walls of residences, etc.

4. Post-consumption

One of the marking characteristics of the modern society refers to the growing generation of industrial and domestic rejects. Parcel of the reject comes back to the productive process. The non-used materials are degraded and reincorporated to nature in periods that vary depending on its physical and chemical characteristics.