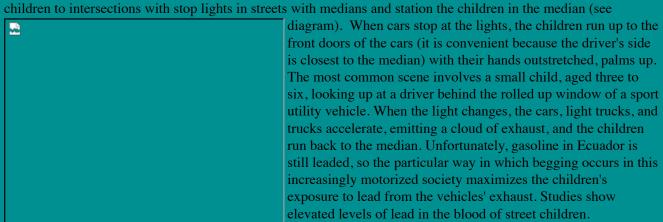


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Streetcorner Environmental Injustice: Begging and Lead Intake among Small Children in Quito, Ecuador

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Every weekday morning in Quito, Ecuador some poor Amerindian mothers take their small children to intersections in the streets where the children spend the day begging from passing motorists. The parents take their children to intersections with stop lights in streets with medians and station the children in the median (see



The lead from the gasoline makes it into the children in other, related ways. Studies show a direct relationship between distance from the road (in meters) and the deposition of lead in soils (Newsome, Aranguen, and Brinkmann 1997). When children play in the grass and dirt on the median, as they do almost all of the time, they take in additional amounts of lead. The same thing happens when they play in the small front yards on either side of the street.

There are plans to refine and sell unleaded gasoline in Ecuador, but it has not happened yet. Because many other countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America continue to produce and consume leaded gasoline, the street children in these places undoubtedly suffer in similar ways.

Reference

Newsome, T., F. Aranguen, and R. Brinkmann, 1997, "Lead contamination adjacent to roadways in Trujillo, Venezuela." *Professional Geographer*. 49(3):331-341.

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