

Male births declining in U.S. and Japan

by UPI

PHILADELPHIA -- Some scientists are blaming pollution and hormone-scrambling chemicals for a drop in the ratio of male babies born in the United States and Japan. Throughout history women all over the world have given birth to an average of 105 boys for every 100 girls, but that gap has been declining in the two countries, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Monday. University of Pittsburg epidemiologist Devra Davis writes in the June issue of Environmental Health Perspectives that the current trend suggests "males are being culled in some systematic fashion" which Davis blames on endocrine disrupters. The chief scientist at the non-profit group Environmental Health Sciences points to a study showing Native Americans living in a highly polluted area of Ontario produced nearly twice as many girls as boys between 1999 and 2003. "The sex ratio is a great marker -- possibly a sentinel of the effects of environmental problems," says Shanna Swan, an epidemiologist at the University of Rochester.

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