Dr. Deocampo is the Chair of Geosciences at Georgia State University. He is a geologist and geochemist, and a licensed Professional Geologist in the states of California and Georgia. He has conducted soil and water quality studies in California, Georgia, and East Africa.

In urban environments he has focused on studying the hazards of lead contamination, mostly legacy pollutants from transportation sources. Deocampo also directs the GSU Environmental Research Laboratory, which provides analytical geochemistry and other services for academic, community, government, and commercial needs.

Discussion Notes

Solutions to environmental problems come from reaching across traditional boundaries. CSAW (Community Soil Air Water) (http://CSAW.gsu.edu) at Georgia State University's Department of Geosciences aims to accomplish a holistic approach and can serve as a community resource. Individuals and groups can make use of computers, software, and academics and connect with each other at this research center. Mapping tools like GIS (Geographic Information Systems) can be particularly useful in visualizing and understanding contamination sites. The Atlanta Community Mapping and Research Center, also at Georgia State University, facilitates these efforts.

A focus on lab science *and* community is important because issues like lead contamination and water stagnation may sometimes be found in low-income areas or areas with high crime rates. When multiple community concerns exist, different kinds of "experts" and citizens have to work together to address them.

We also need to think about the earth as a system. Climate change can influence our exposure to chemicals. As soil dries out, for instance, lead exposure could increase. These kinds of trends should increasingly factor into assessments of contamination.

TAKE-HOME POINTS

Communities have the right and the power to know what contamination, if any, is present.

Some pollutants have direct effects on human health (e.g. lead poisoning, asthma from air pollution).

Others affect health by degrading the environment (e.g. habitat loss).