

# Metal in acid rain called possible cause of hair loss

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*Globe & Mail (Toronto, Canada)*, November 11, 1988  
From *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*

Moscow RUSSIA -- Reuter MOSCOW Acid rain carrying the metal thallium could be the cause of a disease that has made more than 100 children in western Ukraine lose their hair, the Soviet government newspaper *Izvestia* said yesterday.

The thallium was discovered after experts analyzed the ground, water and air in the Ukrainian town of Chernovtsi, which has several chemical and rubber factories, the newspaper said.

It said acid rains in July seemed to have introduced the chemical element into the local environment.

"Thallium is very toxic," Professor Gury Krasovsky of a Moscow health research institute was quoted as saying. "One milligram of thallium to one litre of water is enough to be toxic." *Izvestia* said 113 children have been sent to hospital with hair loss, irritability and hallucinations since August. However, their condition is not serious and there is hope their hair will grow again. Prof. Krasovsky said the blood and internal organs of the children were unharmed.

The newspaper did not explain how significant levels of thallium had entered the atmosphere but repeated official assurances that radiation was not a cause of the disease.

The Chernobyl nuclear power plant, where 31 people died in the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986, is 450 kilometres from Chernovtsi.

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