

What is the issue?

- Decades to centuries of dumping, leaking, and burying contaminated wastes has led to heavily irradiated areas of land that people live on, as well as polluted surface water and groundwater used for drinking.
- Living on or near irradiated land and drinking contaminated water has led to cancers and congenital birth defects in babies

Context

- There are currently more than 1,300 Superfund sites on the National Priority List. 115 in NJ, and 95 in PA
- NJ is the most densely populated state and the 5th smallest state.
- Prolonged exposure to neurotoxins are responsible for causing autism in genetically susceptible individuals (Ming et al., 2008)
- There is a significant increase in the rates of autism and special education students in areas with increased environmental waste (Palmer, 2006)

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Superfund sites are polluted locations in the United States requiring a long-term response to clean up hazardous material contaminations, identified by the EPA, that have been shown to cause congenital birth defects.

I chose to discuss Superfund sites because they are the most prominent in my home state, New Jersey, as well as Pennsylvania (third most). They violate human rights and our SDGs by allowing people to live on or near them and allowing people to drink water associated with them.

There is considerable overlap between identified toxic landfills and diagnosed cases of autism, rates of autism increase the closer people live to Superfund sites.

Human Rights Lens

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 states "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family," (United Nations, 1948).
- SDG 6 calls for clean water and sanitation globally.
- SDG 12 aims to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns while slowing the degradation of the environment (United Nations, n.d.).

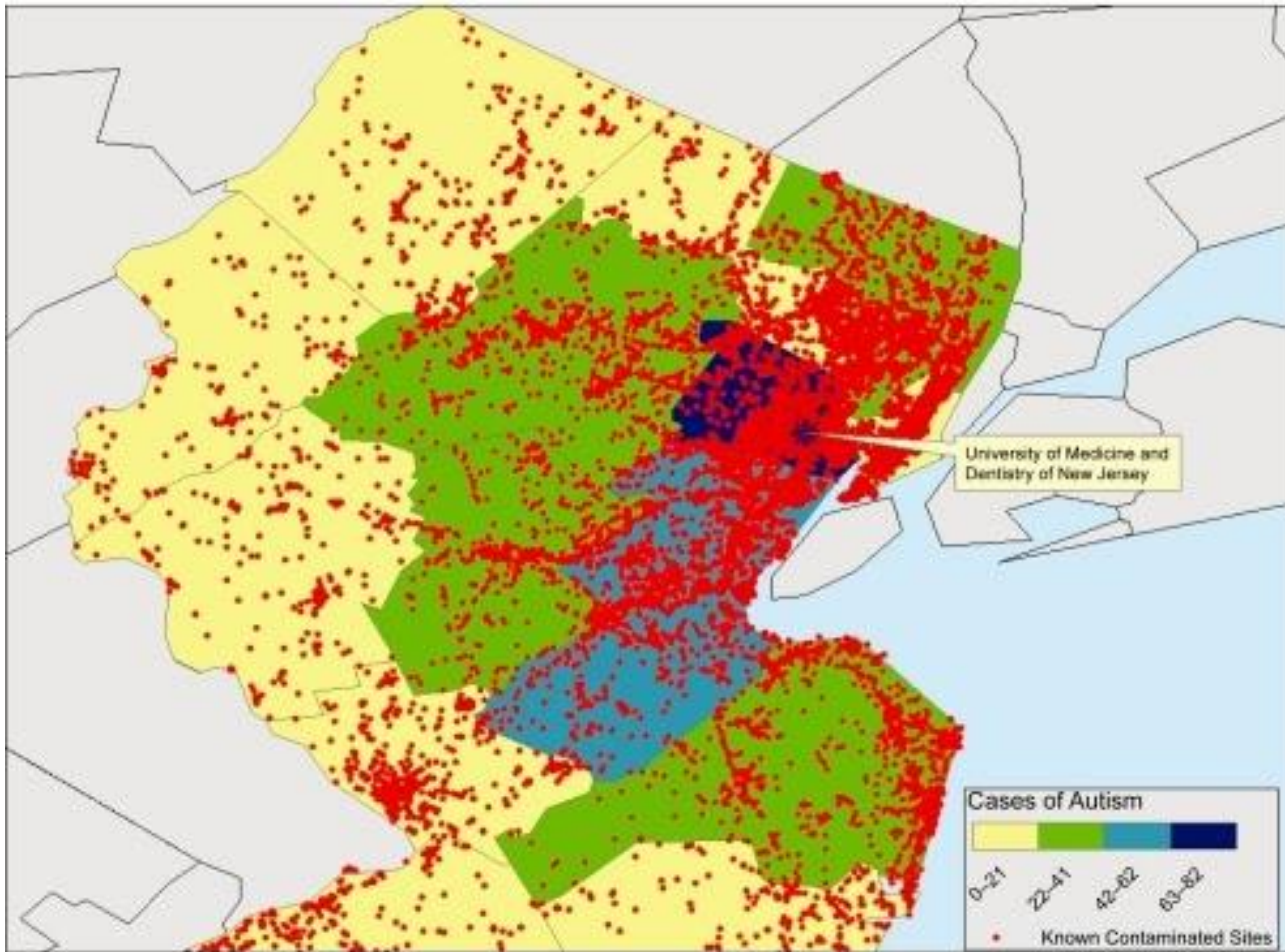
References

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<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-sites-where-you-live>

