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Journal of  
Environmental Radioactivity 53 (2001) 129–131

JOURNAL OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
RADIOACTIVITY

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## Millennial Editorial Series

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PII: S0265-931X(00)00113-2

# So, what is environmental radioactivity anyway?

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## 1. What we do

I would like to consider briefly the definition of “environmental radioactivity”, whether or not it is a separate scientific field, and how people are trained to enter this endeavor. Since we have a journal, a pretty good one I would say, that calls itself the *Journal of Environmental Radioactivity* and we have good scientists walking around claiming to be in the field, then it must be a scientific discipline — right?

Well, it seems to me that environmental radioactivity is actually more of a mixture of disciplines. Clearly, radiation protection, radioecology, health physics and radiochemistry are part of the mix. But let's clarify something — we should refer to the latter specialty as “environmental radiochemistry” rather than “radiochemistry”, since most of us don't seem to get too involved in the search for superheavy elements and such, contrary to some of the classic radiochemists of our age. Rather, it seems to me that those involved in environmental radioactivity are interested in the measurement, distribution and processes that govern how natural and artificial radionuclides behave in the environment. OK, that's good — but that may leave some health physicists out of the picture. So, let's extend the definition to include “... and effects of radiation on human health”.

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