



More than Radon

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Lower limits for indoor radon have recently led to a radon business revival. Unfortunately this has not led to more interest in the wealth of information offered by natural radioactivity in general. This may be due to the fact that the mental gap between geologists and environmental radioactivity specialist has become far larger during the last 20 to 30 years. This contribution will try to mitigate this a little bit. Examples from Switzerland will show that both disciplines can profit from a closer collaboration.

Of particular interest are disequilibria in the uranium decay series.

In this series there are different elements showing different geochemical behaviour. In addition half lives cover many orders of magnitude. Taking into account both geochemical behaviour and half lives helps to understand what's the reason for the many hot spots found in Swiss soils and groundwaters.

That goes from a strong radium anomaly in Jura Mountains' soils, high radon concentrations at hot springs to uranium accumulations in fossil and recent wetlands.