

cc: W. S. Moore
L. Beck

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MOUNT SINAI SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

of The City University of New York

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Department of Community Medicine

Copy for Dr. Levy, Dr. Packer, Bill Haly
This was given to us by regular union meeting by Dr. Levy
August 4 1977
Dr. Farnsworth
I will discuss with you as soon as you are ready
since

Mr. Bernard Leonka, Business Agent
Local 332
United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America
32 William Street
Glens Falls, New York 12801

Dear Mr. Leonka:

We are now approaching the final analyses of all the medical data that we obtained during our clinical field survey in March, 1976.

The first information that is available can be summarized as follows:

1. Skin abnormalities

There was a high prevalence of skin changes among the examined workers. Some of the changes were rather specific in nature and similar to those seen after contact with chlorinated compounds. A few cases of chloracne, the most specific type of skin disease related to PCB's were seen. It is difficult at the present time to evaluate the significance of these findings. There is reason to believe, however, that the skin abnormalities may not only represent a local effect on the skin, but also reflect some degree of metabolic and biochemical disturbances in the body.

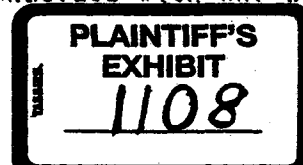
2. Porphyrin metabolism

During our field survey, we examined 30 individuals with regard to the excretion of a compound in the urine called uroporphyrin. An elevated excretion of this substance is invariably associated with metabolic disturbances in the body, in most instances reflecting impairment in liver function. In the examined group, there was one individual with markedly elevated uroporphyrin excretion. This can be PCB-related. This finding warrants further study among a larger number of workers.

3. Pulmonary function tests

All individuals participating in the examination had pulmonary function tests done. We were interested in determining whether the inhalation of PCBs may have an effect on lung function. Although there were very few individuals with subjective complaints of breathing difficulties, we were able to demonstrate with our sensitive

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Mr. Bernard Leouka

breathing tests that there was higher prevalence of pulmonary function abnormalities in this group of individuals when compared with a population without PCB-exposure. We are in the process of analyzing these abnormalities in relation to the different job categories and possible intensity of exposure, which may shed further light on these initial findings.

4. Immunological changes

Since it has become known that substances similar to PCB can affect the immunological system, we conducted a preliminary investigation on ten employees with regard to the number and function of blood cells which are involved in immunological mechanisms (B and T cells). This preliminary investigation showed that there were some abnormalities in these cells. However, in the limited number of people examined, the changes seen were of limited severity. Extension of these studies is planned.

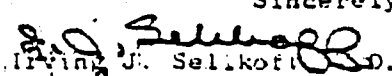
5. PCB concentration in blood

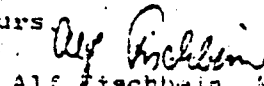
We have concluded the laboratory analysis of the amount of PCB found in the blood. Serum concentrations varied between 10ppm to several hundred ppm. (These are values which are consistent with high PCB-exposure. We are currently analyzing the PCB concentrations in relation to duration of employment, job category and other clinical and laboratory abnormalities. We plan to later review the results with you in detail.

From the information currently available with regard to health effects among your members we were pleased to note that, first, general health appeared good and no urgent, immediate problems were found. Second, some areas of potential interest were identified; these will be further studied. Lastly, and most important, we will be able to study the long term effects, potentially the most important, as well as the nagging question of potential effects on reproduction.

We have been pleased to find that General Electric has shown interest in clarifying the PCB health effects. Indeed they have offered collaboration and help in future studies. Coupled with the valuable assistance the United Electrical Workers Union has given and is giving us, this adds to the promise that research will be useful in helping resolve such PCB problems as might exist, and prevent health hazards in the future.

Sincerely yours


Irving J. Selikoff, M.D.
Professor


Alf Fischbein, M.D.
Instructor

AF:sl

cc: Mrs. Dorothy Danahy
Mr. Boris Block
Dr. David Kotlichuck

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