

SPRINGFIELD PLANT BULLETIN

University of Pittsburgh researchers today announced the results of a study of comparative mortality patterns in workers exposed to formaldehyde versus those not exposed, at the Indian Orchard plant. The study examined causes of death of 136 deceased male workers who were employed for a month or more between 1950 and 1976 in five formaldehyde related areas of the plant. These were compared with the causes of death in 456 deceased male workers who had been employed for less than one month in those areas. In addition, the causes of death in each group were compared with the causes expected to be found in a similar collection of deaths in the U.S. male population and in males from the local county area.

Overall, no statistically significant excesses or deficits were found in the formaldehyde exposed group, whether compared with the unexposed workers or with national or local figures. No important excesses, trends or patterns in cancer mortality were observed among white male exposed workers by age and time of death, by type and duration of exposure, or by the lapsed period from the onset of first exposure to formaldehyde. The number of non-white deaths was too small for detailed analysis.

No deaths from nasal cancer were observed, nor was nasal cancer mentioned as a contributing cause of death on any death certificate.

The investigators concluded that "although certain limitations of the study do not allow definite conclusions to be drawn, the results indicate no trends or patterns in proportional mortality that could be directly linked to formaldehyde exposure."

The study is part of a continuing investigation of the health status of 2490 male workers who were employed at this plant for at least one year between 1949 and 1966.

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