

MCA denies cover-up

The Manufacturing Chemists Assn. denied charges that U.S. chemical companies covered up information on dangers of vinyl chloride exposure. It issued a chronology showing when its member companies became aware of occupational health data.

The chronology indicates that government regulatory agencies and standard-setting groups, such as the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), were reluctant to enact new exposure standards despite accumulating evidence. But MCA contends that it acted to verify the angiosarcoma hazard by initiating its own exposure studies and industry-wide epidemiological investigation as soon as the results of Italian researcher Cesare Maltoni's work, which had been sponsored by five European chemical producers, was made available in Jan. '73.

MCA says that U.S. firms had to sign secrecy agreements in order to gain access to Maltoni's work, but obtained release of the data in summer '73 when the information was made available to government agencies. It also points out that as early as '61, Dow Chemical, a major VCM producer, had recommended reducing exposure limits to 50 ppm. based on its own animal testing but that tests at Yale University in '62 prompted ACGIH to adopt 500 ppm. as the standard.

JUN 5 1974

Chemical Week - June 5, 1974

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