

SPECIAL SECTION - LOUISVILLE SITUATION

PM EDITION

EXECUTIVE NEWS DIGEST

This special section contains all press
clippings and media releases received
during the past 24 hours on the Louisville
situation.

External Communications
and Public Affairs

BFG29748

21350001

Nader group asks government to ban use of vinyl chloride

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Ralph Nader's Health Research Group asked the federal government yesterday to ban the use of vinyl chloride in aerosolized cosmetics, pesticides and other household products.

Several cases of a rare liver cancer have been found among vinyl chloride workers in a B. F. Goodrich Co. chemical plant in Louisville, and in a plant operated by the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in Niagara Falls.

Vinyl chloride, a basic chemical in the plastics industry, is the foundation for hundreds of consumer products.

Dr. Sidney M. Wolfe, director of the research group, said a significant amount of vinyl chloride is used as a propellant in aerosol containers.

Wolfe told a Senate Health subcommittee that a source in the cosmetic industry informed him that vinyl chloride is going into such cosmetic aerosols as hairspray.

"Beauty parlor operators and consumers are using the vinyl chloride," he said. "This chemical may represent another thalidomide," Wolfe said. He did not identify any product brand names.

The Nader petitions to ban the chemicals in aerosols were sent to the Food and Drug Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In letters to the three agency heads, the Nader group asked them to make public the brand names of all aerosol consumer products and cosmetics that contain vinyl chloride.

24250002

BFG29749

2 more deaths tied to

polyvinyl chloride

By KEITH RUNYON
Courier-Journal Staff Writer

Angiosarcoma, the rare liver cancer that caused the deaths of at least five employees of the polyvinyl chloride manufacturing unit of the B.F. Goodrich Co. in Louisville, reportedly killed a worker in West Virginia six years ago and another more recently in Great Britain.

A spokesman for the Union Carbide Corp. in South Charleston, W. Va., said last night that an employee of the plant's

polyvinyl chloride division who died in 1968 had angiosarcoma.

And the medical consultant to the Kentucky Department of Labor, conferring with cancer researchers in Cincinnati yesterday, learned of the death of an employee of England's Imperial Chemical Ltd. Another polyvinyl chloride worker in West Germany also is said to have died of angiosarcoma.

The Union Carbide spokesman reported that medical records of 725 present and past employees were screened to determine whether any had suffered from angiosarcoma. The persons screened worked in the polyvinyl chloride units in South Charleston and in Texas City, Tex.

Of those reviewed, the records indicated that only one man — who worked in the South Charleston plant from 1944 to 1962 — was a victim of the rare disease, the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, Dr. J. Bradford Block, consultant to the state labor department which is investigating the Goodrich employees' deaths, yesterday visited the Kettering Institute of the University of Cincinnati, where research involving monkeys may shed light on the cause and treatment possibilities for angiosarcoma.



The Kettering Institute, which conducts epidemiologic studies (involving diseases in groups of animals), initiated a study in 1969 to determine the relationship, if any, between acroosteolysis, a bone disease, and polyvinyl chloride, according to Block.

B.F. Goodrich financed that study, said Block, but the official observations ended 18 months ago when the funding stopped.

Vinyl chloride, the gas from which polyvinyl chloride is derived, was injected into the monkeys' paws. Since these injections in 1969, they have languished in their cages while the scientists wait to see if disease sets in.

Recent tests indicate that the monkeys developed not only bone problems, but also abnormalities of the liver.

However, the tests conducted so far have not proved that the monkeys have angiosarcoma.

Their conditions, according to Block, will be closely watched to see if, and how fast, the angiosarcoma develops. It may be possible to relate the time the disease develops in the monkeys to its rate of progression in humans.

Block said that he, Kentucky's Labor Commissioner James Yocom, and other officials of that department who visited the Cincinnati facility hope that the University of Louisville Medical School's cancer researchers can participate in the study. He said a meeting between officials of the two schools is in the offing.

Goodrich has announced that five of its employees died between 1964 and last December of angiosarcoma. Another man who worked in the polyvinyl chloride division has developed the cancer, but is still living.

The firm is investigating the link between angiosarcoma and the men's working environment. All of the men who died of the disease worked at some point in the polyvinyl chloride production unit.

Polyvinyl chloride has been manufactured commercially for more than 35 years. It is used to produce items such as phonograph records, some food containers, wire insulation and floor tile.

24250003

BFG29750

The Cincinnati Post

and Times-Star

Wednesday, Feb. 20, 1974

A legacy of cancer

Chilling is the word for the story of human tragedy that lingers these many years after the old Cincinnati Chemical Co. moved away from town.

No, it is more than chilling. We confess to having felt a sense of moral outrage as Richard Gibean's scholarly and balanced series on the specter of benzidine unfolded in our local news pages recently.

Apparently it was not widely known or accepted in this country until the 1950s that benzidine, a compound used in the production of dyestuffs, had been closely linked to cancer of the bladder. Doctors in Europe sounded warnings as early as 1929, but American workmen were being regularly and unknowingly exposed to benzidine as late as 1958.

THAT WAS the year an employee of Cincinnati Chemical, a division of Toms River Chemical Corp., was found to have a bladder tumor. Twenty-five men who had been making the stuff were examined by doctors. Four were found to have cancer of the bladder; two had non-malignant tumors. Medical records indicate three others had cancers confirmed in 1957.

"Limited surveillance" of this "original exposed group" went on until 1971 under the leadership of Dr. Mitchell Zavon, then an associate of UC's Kettering Laboratory. By that time, however, the company had been gone from Cincinnati more than a decade. The 630 people who worked for it here in various capacities had retired or taken other jobs.

Even though their exposure ceased years ago, the 25 workers and others not in the study have continued to develop bladder tumors. At least one case occurred within the past year. Medical opinion understandably is divided in situations as complicated as this. But respectable authority apparently can be marshalled to argue that exposure to benzidine for 90 days carries with it a latent risk for up to 20 years.

GIVEN THIS possibility—maybe even probability—that people who work with benzidine get cancer, were warnings widely spread? The answer is a shocking NO. As Gibean reported:

"For 15 years the harvest of tumors among Cincinnati Chemical workers remained essentially a private chronicle. Beyond company circles, the story was known to several Cincinnati urologists who treated the workers, to state agencies with responsibility for investigating and approving compensation claims and

to a group of researchers at Kettering Laboratory."

Some workers and former workers say the company made reasonable efforts to notify everyone who might have been exposed. Others, including one who spent most of his working lifetime with the firm and who still lives here, told The Post they never heard about Zavon's 12-years study of their fellow workers.

Not until last July, it seems, was there a public disclosure of the benzidine epidemic of 1958. That was when Zavon's study of the epidemic was published in the Archives of Environmental Health. The study identified Cincinnati Chemical only as a "local chemical plant." Such disclosure could be called "public" only by straining the definition.

If anyone may be thanked for pulling the self-serving cloak of secrecy from this episode it is a former employee of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). In a conversation with Gibean, he told of having learned of a study of a "horrendous" local example of job-related hazards.

In fairness to those who somehow failed to see this in human as well as statistical terms, it's true that the nation's annual toll of job-related death and disease has only recently received the attention it has long deserved. Society today demands a higher degree of concern for public welfare. People have a right to decide for themselves what hazards they are willing to risk on the job.

Contrast the conduct of Toms River Chemical Corp. since 1958 with B. F. Goodrich Co., a firm which is involved at present in a similar situation.

A RARE CANCER of the liver is the specter that hangs over the Louisville plant of B. F. Goodrich. Four workers who died of that disease had been exposed to vinyl chloride in the production of polyvinyl chloride. Goodrich publicly disclosed the situation, pledged to cooperate with NIOSH and is notifying families of workers of subsequent developments.

As commendable as these new attitudes are, as significant as they stand in man's long fight to gain some voice in his own destiny, they are small solace to victims of benzidine and hundreds of other hazardous industrial materials.

We're not suggesting that medical researchers rush into print at each flicker of suspicion. But the history of this city could do without another chapter as dark as that of the Cincinnati Chemical Co.

BFG29751

24250004

BFG29752

24250005

Vinyl chloride issue
study is requested
The Courier-Journal Bureau
PHARMPORT, Ky. — Sen. Kefauver, D-Tennessee, yesterday told the Senate he is seeking an investigation of whether workers' compensation adequately covers employees who have illnesses stemming from work with vinyl chloride.
Kefauver introduced Senate Resolution 34, which would direct the Legislative Research Commission to study the subject. Kefauver told the Senate his interest was sparked by recent news stories in The Courier-Journal about employees who contracted a rare form of cancer after working with vinyl chloride.

THE COURIER-JOURNAL, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1974

THE WASHINGTON POST
February 22, 1974

COSMETIC COMPLAINTS

by Nancy L. Ross

The cosmetics industry yesterday told a Senate health subcommittee it had an excellent safety record -- only 9,700 injuries last year -- and no additional regulation, especially pre-marketing clearance by the Food and Drug Administration, was necessary. Testimony came on the second and final day of hearings to revise cosmetics laws.

Under questioning by Senator Thomas Eagleton (D-Mo.), J. Richard Edmonson, chairman of the Cosmetics, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, did concede, however, that industry could live with mandatory registration of manufacturers, filling of formulas with the FDA and reporting of verified complaints.

Industry representatives balked when the senator asked them to respond to a subcommittee questionnaire detailing the total number of complaints they received annually, brand names of the offending products, the total value of their advertising budgets compared to their safety testing budgets and how much they had paid out in damage suits. Companies seemed willing to comply only on the condition the information not be made public.

Earlier, consumer advocate Ralph Nader had accused the industry of contradicting itself. He said: "On one hand, they tend to minimize adverse reactions from cosmetics and boast of how safe they are. But at the same time, they strongly oppose mandatory programs of adverse reaction reporting with public disclosure and don't want the government forcing them to prove their products safe."

(more)

BFG29753

24250006

The Health Research Group, a Nader organization, yesterday asked the government to ban vinyl chloride, a propellant for aerosols, including inexpensive hairsprays. A derivative of vinyl chloride, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) has recently been linked to the deaths of five plastics workers in Kentucky. A sixth worker has also contracted the rare form of liver cancer.

Dr. Wolfe said he did not know how many personal and household products contained vinyl chloride because no ingredient labeling is legally required on cosmetics. He asked FDA Commissioner Alexander Schmidt to make the brand names public.

Dr. Wolfe maintains a manufacturer he declined to identify told him recently vinyl chloride was still being used in hairsprays. A spokesman for Dow Chemical, which makes vinyl chloride, said it had recommended in May 1973 that the propellant not be used for personal products. A spokesman for Aerosol Age magazine said vinyl chloride was no longer in wide use.

CTFA presented an Arthur D. Little Inc. study showing that review of the 25,000 cosmetics now on the market would take "all of the estimated 1,340 qualified experimental and veterinary pathologists now practicing in the U.S. half of their time for 30 years and would cost \$6.5 billion."

These figures were challenged by Dr. Sidney M. Wolfe of the Health Research Group, who said the cost would be much less due to duplication of cosmetics and because many marginal products would be eliminated at the very prospect of government scrutiny.

WASHINGTON, D.C. - FEBRUARY 21, 1974

16 The Health Research Group, meanwhile, petitioned CPSC, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency to ban the use of vinyl chloride in aerosolized cosmetics, including hairsprays, in aerosolized household products, and in pesticides, on grounds "there is substantial evidence that vinyl chloride is a carcinogen."

The petitioner is a public interest group funded by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen group. The research group declared:

"Vinyl chloride is known to be used as a propellant for aerosols. The chronic toxicity and evidence of carcinogenicity of vinyl chloride monomer for humans has been documented by scientific studies and clinical reports. Immediate action is necessary to regulate the use of the chemical since there is no evidence to show that human beings can be safely exposed to the chemical.

"Vinyl chloride monomer, which is used in making polyvinyl chloride (PVC), has received much attention in the past few weeks since it has been linked with a rapidly rising number of liver cancer deaths among vinyl chloride workers at a single B. F. Goodrich plant in Louisville, Kentucky. In the past few days the sixth case of the rare and invariably fatal cancer--angiosarcoma of the liver--has been diagnosed in a worker at that plant.

"Experimental studies have found production of the same type of liver cancer in rats after inhalation of vinyl chloride at doses as low as 250 ppm (for 127 weeks), according to an Italian study presented at a Department of Labor hearing on the chemical last Friday.

"According to a published report, the levels of vinyl chloride--under conditions where hair spray is being used--can exceed 250 ppm (Aerosol Age, April 1964, p. 47). Most industries--including B. F. Goodrich--say that it has been their practice in recent years to try to keep industrial exposures down to 50 ppm over an 8 hour day. The federal occupational health standard is currently 500 ppm."

* The Health Research Group also requested that the Food and Drug Administration immediately prohibit the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) containers to package any cosmetic product which is capable of leaching detectable amounts of vinyl chloride from its plastic container.

In letters to the heads of all three agencies, the group requested that the agency make public the brand names of all aerosol consumer products and cosmetics presently marketed--or marketed at any time in the past--which contain vinyl chloride as a propellant so that "exposed people" can inform their physicians.