

Eighth liver-cancer victim from local plant discovered

By DENNIS POLITE

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The cause of death of a former worker at the B. F. Goodrich Chemical Co. plant here has been attributed to angiosarcoma, a rare cancer of the liver. The man, who died in 1969 at Ireland Army Hospital at Ft. Knox, Ky., worked at the Goodrich facility from 1950 to 1954.

The Goodrich plant produces vinyl chloride. Exposure to vinyl chloride is thought to cause angiosarcoma. Seven workers at the Bells Lane plant have been diagnosed as having the cancer; five of the cases were discovered after the men died. Two men with the cancer are still alive.

29 other cases turn up

Since Goodrich announced in January of this year that it suspected exposure to the chemical was causing the cancer, a worldwide search has turned up 18 other cases, including some among workers who were exposed to by-products of vinyl chloride.

Goodrich officials said today the record on the eighth case is sketchy. They said they don't know what department the man worked in while he was at the facility.

The case was uncovered by federal investigators working on a study of all former Goodrich employees.

Richard Waxweiler, principal investigator on the project, said 3,200 persons who have worked at the plant have to be checked out.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health is conducting the study

of former Goodrich employees. Waxweiler said the death certificate of the man who died in 1969 lists the cause of death as angiosarcoma, and says the cancer had spread to the lungs.

He said the Communicable Disease Center would investigate the death further, including all autopsy records.

Both spokesmen for the job-safety institute and Goodrich said it was not known at this time where the man worked before or after his employment at Goodrich. He died at age 42.

Although the other workers had worked at the plant for between 12 and 29 years, the dead man's length of service of only four years may lead to new theories on the amount of exposure that causes the cancer, Waxweiler said. He said the short period of work time at Goodrich makes the case "very interesting at this stage."

Government takes action

The discovery of the cancer-causing properties of the chemical, a gas, and its wide presence in various consumer products have led to several recent governmental actions.

The government standard on the allowable amount of exposure to workers was amended from 500 parts per million parts of air to 50 parts. A recommendation from the job-safety institute to the U. S. Labor Department to reduce the allowable exposure level to zero is under study.

Some aerosol products using the chemical have been taken off the market and

studies are under way to see if the vinyl chloride in polyvinyl chloride poses any danger to the public. Also, air studies around the plants have been made.

Vinyl chloride is used to produce polyvinyl chloride, a major ingredient in many plastics.

A spokesman at the Washington office of the job-safety institute said the latest discovery "is what I anticipated was going to happen."

He said that although other plants that produce vinyl chloride have not yet found as many cases as has the Louisville works, "It is too early in the game to say that one plant is going to produce any more than the other."

Dutch goof in Java: wrong trees planted for getting quinine

LIMA, Peru — For a long time, cinchona was widely used, sharply disputed and little understood.

This tree, from whose bark quinine was extracted, was not scientifically identified until the 18th century, and the principal chemical constituents were not isolated until the 19th.

Even then, drug dealers did not distinguish between efficacious cinchona species and those of little or no medical value.

When the Dutch established great cinchona plantations on Java in 1860, most of the million trees planted proved to be of the wrong variety.

Why do we say this when we know damn well where he worked!!??

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