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DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE &
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Sir Richard Doll
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Dear Sir Richard:

I can tell you something about the vinyl chloride study that I was involved in but not much about the other studies.

The Equitable Environmental Health Study of 1978 was an expansion of the 1974 paper by Tabershaw and me. As I recall, the follow-up was improved and a group of exposed workers from Union Carbide, inadvertently left out of our study, was included. The Chemical Manufacturers Association recently commissioned an update of that study by Environmental Health Associates of Berkeley, California. The principal investigator, Otto Wong, did much of the work on the 1978 paper by EEH. A report is expected late this year.

The 1976 paper by Waxweiler et al used a cohort which was about two thirds from the Goodrich Louisville plant (i.e. the plant that announced three angiosarcomas before the study began, page 43). This plant was also the major contributor to the original Tabershaw study.

I don't know anything about the sources of the cohorts in the other studies, but the American ones almost had to use people from some of the plants in the 1978 Equitable study, since that study included all the U.S. plants that could be persuaded to join in.

The forthcoming update of the 1978 Equitable study was pushed by Ted Torkelson, a toxicologist at Dow who just retired, because he felt that the findings for lung and brain cancer in the earlier study were based on too few observations to be trustworthy.

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That's about all I know, but keep your hand on your wallet when you read the Waxweiler paper. The tables listing liver and brain cancers contain over twice as many cases as there are deaths in the study SMR tables for those causes, and the authors aren't as scrupulous as I think as I think they should have been in pointing this out.

Yours sincerely,

Bill

William R. Gaffey,
Epidemiology Director

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