

Inter-organization Correspondence

BFGoodrich

TO	R. B. Downey	FIELD POINT OR AKRON DEPARTMENT & BLOS. NO.	DATE YOUR LETTER
FROM	C. R. Carter	FIELD POINT OR AKRON DEPARTMENT & BLOS. NO.	DATE THIS LETTER
			Sept. 4, 1974

VCM-related inquiries at Louisville plant

Phil Lawrence called PR office at 1:15 PM today to inform us that Dr. Creech had been contacted Tuesday, 9/3/74, and today, by reporters for the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post.

Lawrence said the questions were of this type: "How come BFGCC didn't know of the significance of the cancer deaths prior to the January 1974 announcement?" and "Were you holding back information?" Also, "If there didn't seem to be any problem, why was BFGCC doing testing in summer of 1973?"

Lawrence said Dr. Creech responded to the first two in this vein: First death (1971) was an incident; when second (May 1973) occurred, it took some time for cause of death to filter down, to reach him; when third (Dec. 1973) occurred, the announcement was made.

Lawrence said Dr. Creech evidently didn't remember why "testing began in summer of 1973". Lawrence explained (to me) that it wasn't until summer 1973 that instrumentation (to test) became available.

Lawrence said he contacted Tom Duke in Akron to tell him of the calls to Creech. Lawrence also wanted to alert you to the inquiries. Also, in your absence, he asked that I inform J. L. Nelson. I will do this by means of sending him a copy of this memo.

/c

cc: J. L. Nelson

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A. Vittone
 R. D. Scott
 J. L. Nelson
 E. W. Harrington
 H. Waltemate
 B. M. G. Zwicker
 G. Pow
 W. J. Wilcox
 P. J. Weaver
 R. B. Downey
 E. B. Osborne
 R. P. Kenney - A. L. Hatfield - C. R. Flynn
R. Greene

A 2 Thursday, Sept. 5, 1974 THE WASHINGTON POST

Vinyl Chloride Link to Cancer

By Bob Kuttner
 Washington Post Staff Writer

Evidence existed as early as 1971 that low doses of vinyl chloride caused cancer in laboratory animals, according to an internal technical report by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer.

The researcher isn't identified, but several prominent U.S. cancer scientists believe he is Dr. P. L. Viola, the Italian researcher whose earlier work first alerted the chemical industry to the possible carcinogenic — cancer-causing — effects of high doses of vinyl chloride.

So far, 14 deaths from a rare liver cancer called angiosarcoma have been reported among U.S. chemical workers exposed to vinyl chloride gas, which is the base ingredient for one of the most common plastics, polyvinyl chloride.

The disclosure Jan. 22 by the B. F. Goodrich Co. that three workers in its Louisville, Ky., plant died of angiosarcoma led to a crash research program by several federal agencies, including the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Consequently, OSHA adopted an emergency standard lowering exposure limits to 500 parts per million for vinyl chloride workers from 50 parts per million, and NIOSH has recommended a permanent permissible level of zero.

In addition, dozens of consumer aerosol products containing vinyl chloride gas as a propellant have been withdrawn from the market.

In the wake of these findings, the chemical industry has been sharply criticized by cancer scientists for failing to fully inform either the government or its own plant physicians about the results of European studies showing links to cancer as early as 1971.

"If the latest report means what it seems to mean," said Dr. Irving Selikoff, director of the Environmental Sciences Laboratory at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York, "then we're nearly four years behind where we should be."

"You don't automatically assume that animal studies are conclusive, but the industry should have at least notified their own doctors," he added. "It's inexcusable that they didn't tell the government."

Dr. Sidney Wolfe, director of the Nader-sponsored Health Research Group, said: "It would have been appropriate for them to tell us about the European studies as soon as they knew," added a NIOSH scientist.

According to the Manufacturing Chemists Association, the principal industry trade association, the MCA invited Dr. Viola to discuss his study with U.S. industry representatives in May, 1971. The preliminary findings were not published until May, 1972.

Only after B. F. Goodrich reported that its Louisville plant physician, Dr. John Creech, independently discovered three cases of angiosarcoma did the trade association fully reveal the Maltoni findings to NIOSH officials. Even at that point, according to NIOSH sources, the MCA asked NIOSH to keep the findings secret.

Dr. Maurice Johnson, Goodrich's medical director, confirmed that he knew about the concentrations as low as 250 Maltoni study but said that he saw no need to notify the company's plant physicians.

An Aug. 21 Senate hearing on "It was by no means a finished study," he said.

When Goodrich's Dr. Creech found the third case of angiosarcoma among plant workers, Dr. Johnson said, "that was the clincher."

Known in 1971, Report Says

Many studies showed vinyl chloride was carcinogenic at levels of 30,000 parts per million.

By November, 1971, the MCA was aware that concentrations of 5,000 parts per million "and perhaps less" also could cause tumors in laboratory animals.

According to the latest World Health Organization report, which summarizes a meeting held last June, a laboratory in Italy during that period—presumably Dr. Viola's—was also finding that concentrations as low as 500 parts per million could cause tumors, including angiosarcomas of the liver. Those results have not yet been published. Subsequently, the European studies in the United States.

chemical industry sponsored another series of experiments by a second Italian scientist, Dr. Cesare Maltoni. The U.S. Manufacturing Chemists Association learned of Dr. Maltoni's studies in late 1972. Those studies showed that animal tumors could be produced at concentrations as low as 250 parts per million, or half the permissible exposure levels for workers in the United States.

However, the MCA did not share the information with government agencies, having promised its European counterparts to keep the findings secret. Instead, the MCA and several of its member companies contracted for new animal studies in the United States.

It also arranged for an epidemiological survey, to study the health records of workers exposed to vinyl chloride.

In June, 1973, at a meeting with NIOSH officials, industry representatives are said to have downplayed the significance of the European findings.

Although the 1973 Maltoni research indicated that liver cancer could be caused at firms that he knew about the concentrations as low as 250 Maltoni study but said that he saw no need to notify the company's plant physicians.

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