



MANUFACTURING CHEMISTS ASSOCIATION

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September 26, 1973

CHEMICAL
RESEARCH

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TO: TECHNICAL TASK GROUP ON VINYL CHLORIDE RESEARCH

SUBJECT: Scare Publicity on Vinyl Chloride Hazards

Gentlemen:

Enclosed herewith is a copy of a Dow translation of excerpts from an Italian newspaper article on occupational health hazards; reference is made to a number of other chemicals as well. MCA has made inquiry of European contacts as to the situation leading to the publication of this article, but at the present time we are not aware of any specific stimulus to its appearance last month.

This notice is being sent to alert the American vinyl chloride producers and users, in order that they may be prepared to respond to inquiries directed to them from the press or public. MCA has, to date, received no such inquiries. If we do, we plan to respond along the following lines:

(1) The Association and its members are aware of the research reported by Drs. Caputo and Viola at the 10th International Cancer Congress in Houston, in 1970, and subsequently published in the periodical literature. In this study, they produced cancer in rats by long-term exposure to vinyl chloride monomer vapors at concentrations 150 times as high as those permitted under current industrial hygiene standards.

(2) In May of 1971, we brought Dr. Viola to the United States to discuss his work in detail, and to secure his evaluation of the significance of his results. At that time Dr. Viola specifically disclaimed any implications of hazard to the users of polyvinyl chloride products, or any suggestion that present industrial hygiene standards for vinyl chloride monomer exposure were inadequate to protect the worker from risk of occupationally caused cancer.

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(3) We are not aware of any new findings by Dr. Caputo et al to cause these judgments of Dr. Viola to be reversed, nor are we aware of any evidence of increased cancer incidence in either American or European vinyl chloride workers.

(4) While MCA and its vinyl chloride monomer producing and consuming members feel that the results of Drs. Caputo and Viola ought not to cause alarm, they do indicate a need for concern and for more precise and reliable data on the hazards identified by their work.

(5) As a result of their concern, they have initiated, and publicly announced, two research projects toward those ends: (1) a chronic inhalation study involving 2,500 rats, mice, and hamsters, and (2) an epidemiological study of those past and present employees of our member companies with a history of significant industrial exposure to vinyl chloride. Results of both studies will be made available to the public.

If you prefer to refer any inquiries you receive to MCA, we will be prepared to respond as indicated above. Any additional information that you may have on the background to the Italian article, or comments on industry reaction to it, will be welcomed.

Sincerely,



Kenneth D. Johnson, Ph.D.
Secretary
Technical Task Group on Vinyl
Chloride Research

KDJ:mb

Attachment

cc : Dr. D. P. Duffield
Mr. D. M. Elliott
Dr. Tiziano Garlanda

From "Corriere Della Sera", Milano, Italy, August 7, 1973
(A daily newspaper)

Headline: "The poisons included in the wages."

Portion of headline underlined: "Cancer from vinyl chloride
may strike 40,000 persons."

Portion of text underlined: "Professor Antonio Caputo and his team of doctors of the Roman 'Regina Elena' Institute for research on cancer have discovered that vinyl chloride brings about the formation of tumors in the lungs, on the skin, in the bones. 'Vinyl chloride', Professor Caputo told us, 'is the basic compound for the manufacture of polyvinyl resins, the use of which has conditioned a number of practical aspects of the life of man.' (Thus) are explained the dozens (literally tens) of deaths due to cancer among the employees of Montedison and 'Acna', (thus) is explained the alarm among the workers of Europlastica, Uniroyal, Shell, Solvay. But the use of vinyl chloride is normal and intense in any factory of plastic materials and colorants, that is in sectors, that employ about 40,000 workers.

"Forty thousand: still a minority.'No', corrects Professor Caputo, '-the menace applies to everybody. These synthetic resins go into a large part of the products commonly referred to as of plastic, and are particularly hazardous in containers for foodstuffs, in preparations for cosmetic (literally aesthetic) surgery, in filters for artificial kidneys, in cardiac valves. The appearance of 208 types of tumor can be attributed to the action of organic polymers, which, under particular conditions, liberate vinyl chloride.'

(Translated 9/20/73 by H. V. Lewert, Communications Dept.,
Dow Chemical Co.)