

1009.

FD info to JEN/SFN/SK/HH/JLB

IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND

Cancer Epidemiology and Clinical Trials Unit

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Head Director: PROFESSOR SIR RICHARD DOLL, F.R.S.
Telephone: Oxford (0865) 57766 & 57851

9 Keble Road
Oxford OX1 3QD

10 October 1979

Mr. R. Sykes
TBA Industrial Products Ltd.
P.O. Box 40
Rochdale
Lancs OL12 7EQ

Dear Reg,

The 'New Scientist' article on "A scale for measuring risks" seems fairly sensible, although the initial quotation from Richard Doll, that environmental agents "cause the majority of all cancers, is, as usual, used extremely misleadingly. By "environmental", he meant everything caused by life-style in the widest sense, including sex, which causes cervical cancer, having a first baby after the age of 30, which increases the risk of breast cancer, and a Western diet, which seems to be correlated with the risk of breast and colo-rectal cancer. Doll would also say that less than 5% of cancers are caused by industrial exposure.

I have presented the results of some of my predictions in terms of "percentage dying as a result of asbestos exposure" because this is always asked for. The original B.O.H.S. report was necessarily expressed in this way, because crepitations are not fatal, and the C.A. particularly asked me to cite percentages who would get cancer following various periods of exposure at various fibre levels, but 1% getting asbestos-induced cancer sounds much worse than a loss of expected life of less than 2 months, which is what it actually means. Incidentally, you can get a rough idea of the "percentages killed" corresponding to the table of loss of expected life in the New Scientist by dividing by 15 years. Thus, for example, if a coal-miner entering the industry at age 20 loses on average 155 days of expected life, about 3% (i.e. $155/(365 \times 15)$) of life-long miners are killed by mining.

I have always thought that risks of the order of 1% or 2% are quite acceptable, but many people (including Dr. Allardice) strongly disagree, and it is after all a matter of personal judgement. The trouble is that you could hardly present such a point of view, because your motives would receive more attention than what you actually said. It is, to say the least, a can of worms.

Yours sincerely,

Julian Peto

Office of the Fund, P.O. Box No. 113, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PS Registered Charity No. 20651

Dr. J.T. Allardice

TBA Industrial Products Ltd

Office of Origin

To

Mr. R. Sykes,
Rochdale.

Dr. J.T. Allardice,
TBA
Manchester.

Ref: RB7/JH
Copy: SM/JLB

Your Ref:

5th September 1979

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

JULIAN PETO - PROPOSED PAPER FOR THE LYON CONFERENCE
MORTALITY FOLLOW-UP OF TBA COHORT

I understand that Dr. Bonnell has already sent to you a copy of the draft paper which Julian Peto has prepared for presentation at the forthcoming Lyon Conference. The paper is intended to cover a follow-up study of the on-going TBA/Imperial Cancer Research Fund mortality programme.

Last week Dr. Bonnell, Steve Holmes (who, of course, has been involved with JP's previous papers on the TBA cohort) and I met to discuss this paper and I have now sent to JP our joint reaction (copy enclosed). I now intend to follow this up with a 'phone call and ask that JP visits us for further discussions.

Clearly, both Mr. Hardie and yourself will be interested in this subject and as soon as I hear from Julian Peto I will let you know of his reaction to our comments. In the meantime, I enclose extra copies for you to pass on to Dr. Hardie.

R. Sykes

PLANTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
11-127