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Study Hints of Genetic Brain Tumor Link From Exposure to Paint Materials

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Washington, D.C., July 29—A study that might indicate children of persons employed in paint and chemical industries may face a greater chance of brain tumors than children whose parents are not employed by those industries was announced recently by the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

The study was of 92 children under 10 years of age who had brain tumors and 92 who did not. It was found that seven children with brain tumors had fathers who had been exposed to paints while only one child who did not have a tumor had a father who had been exposed to paints.

The study also found that 17 children with tumors had fathers who had been exposed to chemical solvents while six children who did not have tumors were found to have fathers who had been exposed to solvents.

Mothers of children who had tumors, the study said, reported more than three times as often as mothers of the control group that they had skin exposure to chemicals. It also was found mothers of children with tumors reported three times more frequently that they had inhaled chemicals, fumes and dusts.

The study, conducted by telephone, asked information about both parents. Questions were asked about mothers' and fathers' work history one year before pregnancy, during pregnancy, during nursing and at the time the child was diagnosed to have a tumor. Also asked of mothers were questions about the use of

drugs, alcohol and other such substances.

A strong association was found between fathers being employed in the aircraft industry and cases of brain tumors.

Published in the July 10 issue of *Science* magazine, the study was the subject of stories in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*.

"As the authors say, there's a need for more research," said Patrick J. Hurd, manager, health affairs, National Paint and Coatings Association.

Larry Thomas, NPCA executive director, said the study is not conclusive.

"We have just reviewed the articles and while they raise questions which should be explored, the articles themselves, in the *Washington Post* and the *Wall Street Journal*, indicate more research is needed. No definite conclusion can be drawn at the present time."

"Based on our preliminary reading of the report and based on the stature of the research institution involved," Thomas said, "we are confident this research organization would not attempt at this early stage, based on these preliminary findings, to draw a specific connection between our products and any diseases in children of parents having used such products."

"We are making an effort to get all further reports and data, including raw data, which relate to this matter and plan to become involved in any further developments as necessary," Thomas added.

The study said its findings were not intended to be definitive. "The lack of detail of our occupational histories plus a general ignorance about the etiology of brain tumors prevents us from speculating about specific carcinogens that could account for our findings," the study said.