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For Immediate Release

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WASHINGTON, D. C., May 7 -- Vinyl chloride workers have experienced overall death rates that compare favorably to those experienced by other U. S. industrial populations, according to the findings of a just-completed survey.

Administered by the Manufacturing Chemists Association (MCA) on behalf of vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride producers, the survey was conducted by Tabershaw-Cooper Associates, Inc.

It identified 8,384 past and present employees of the VC/PVC industry and had determined the vital status of 7,128. Among these individuals, 352 deaths had occurred during the period under study and death certificates had been obtained on 328.

Initiated June 15, 1973, the survey showed that although the total number of such cases was small, there did appear to be suggestive dose-related increases in the incidence of cancers of the urinary organs and the brain in the longer-exposed workers, as compared with their counterparts who, at the time of death, had worked for shorter periods in jobs exposing them to vinyl chloride. The study showed, however, that statistically significant differences in mortality appeared only where reported death rates were lower than that of the general population.

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Dr. Irving R. Tabershaw, of Tabershaw-Cooper, is to report the results of the survey at a meeting to be held under the auspices of the New York Academy of Sciences May 10.

MCA announced on April 16 preliminary indications that vinyl chloride exposure produced liver angiosarcomas -- a rare cancer -- in mice at several exposure levels.

Industrial Bio-Test Laboratories, Inc., which is conducting the MCA-administered vinyl chloride animal exposure study, informed MCA that their preliminary findings tend to confirm the findings of Professor Cesare Maltoni, an Italian scientist, who found that vinyl chloride exposure caused such cancer in rats.

The animal exposure study is continuing and the producers are looking at other areas for further vinyl chloride testing.

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