FINAL REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYLS AND POLYBROMINATED BIPHENYLS

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A summary updating of the "Yusho" incident was presented by Professor Kuratsune at the National Conference on Polychlorinated Biphenyls, Chicago, Illinois, November 19, 1975 (Kuratsune et al., 1976). This report affects the original conclusions enumerated above.

1. PCBs Content of "Yusho" Oil.

The first reported PCB determination was made on a canned contaminated rice oil produced on February 5, 1968, and whose consumption was associated with overt symptomology. One group of Yusho patients was associated with ingestion of this contaminated canned rice oil produced or shipped on February 5 and 6, 1968 (Kuratsune et al., 1972).

The detailed epidemiologic studies are given in the papers by Kuratsune et al., (1969) and Yoshimura (1971) and summarized in English by Kuratsune (1972), Kuratsune et al., (1971) and Kuratsune et al., (1972). Of 325 patients queried, 166 of 170 used canned rice oil produced or shipped on February 5 and 6, 1968, and 143 of 155 used bottled rice oil shipped from February 5 to 15, 1968. Tsukamoto et al., (1969) determined that the organic chlorine content of canned rice oils produced or shipped on February 5, 1968, was 1000 to 1500 ppm, by chemical and activation analysis. Since Kanechlor 400 had a 48 per

cent chlorine content, if one attributed all the organic chlorine to this specific chlorinated biphenyl, then this canned rice oil contained, as an average, 2500 ppm PCBs. Kuratsune et al., (1969) reported that a qualitative GLC survey of 109 samples of bottled rice oil shipped between October, 1967, and October, 1968, showed "significant" PCBs content only in those samples between February 7 to 10, 1968. The largest amount was reported in the sample of February 7, 1968, but the quantity was not given. No bottled rice oil samples were available for February 5 and 6, 1968. However, in the paper by Kuratsune et al., (1971), the most marked contamination of bottled rice oil was for that shipped on February 7, 1968; and the maximum chlorine content was 462 ppm. One may assume that this number applies to the sample of bottled rice oil of February 7, 1968, giving this sample a PCBs content of 924 ppm. Kuratsune et al., (1976), reporting the work of Nagayama et al., (1975b), gives the PCBs analyses for three samples of toxic "Yusho" oil, used by three independent families with "Yusho", as approximately 800 to 1000 ppm. These were GLC/MS measurements. Nagayama, et al., (1975b), described these samples as follows:

"Rice oil used by patients with Yuso ("Yusho oil"): 3 samples of rice oil used by 3 independent families with Yusho in 1968. These samples had been kept in glass bottles with glass stoppers at room temperature in our laboratory until 1974 when the analysis was made."

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Kuratsune (1976) pointed out that these three samples were canned oil and considered to have been produced and shipped on February 5 or 6, 1968. This is also suggested in footnote a, Table 5, in the paper by Kuratsune et al., (1976). It was reported previously that, based on organic chlorine determinations, Tsukamoto et al., (1969) reported an average PCB content of the canned oil of February 5, 1968, to be 2500 ppm. Now, based on HLC/MS, we have a PCB content of ca 1000 ppm for canned oil sample of February 5 or 6, 1968.

What are the possible explanations for this discrepancy in values? One possibility is based on the assumptions associated with the method of measurement by Tsukamoto et al., (1969); namely, determination of total organic chlorine. Thus, any orgnic chlorine present in the rice oil, which was not a chlorinated biphenyl, would be included in the PCB analysis. Some possibilities include: chlorinated dibenzofurans, chlorinated naphthalenes, chlorinated paraffins, other chlorinated aliphatics and non-biphenyl aromatics.

Another possibility is related to the distribution, with time, of the contaminated rice oil samples. February 5, 1968, occurred on a Monday. The first rice oil samples reported to contain PCBs were produced on this date (Tsukamoto et al.; 1969). If the leak first occurred sometime over the weekend (February 3 and 4, 1968), and

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production was resumed Monday morning, February 5, 1968, then one would expect the samples of this date to be higher in PCB content.

Therefore, one would expect the first batches Monday morning to be highest with a dimunution of PCB content with time. Tsukamoto et al., (1969) reported the organic chlorine content of six canned oils produced Monday, February 5, 1968, as follows: 1020, 1170, 1070, 1080, 1030, and 1500 ppm. In the survey of bottled oils, Kuratsune et al., (1969) reported that for those samples where PCBs were found, the greatest amount was in the samples of February 7 (Wednesday); and after February 11. It was inferred from the paper by Kuratsune et al., (1971) that the PCB content of the bottled rice oil samples of February 7, 1968, was 924 ppm. In addition, in Table 5, Kuratsune et al., (1976) gave a value of 134 ppm PCB for a rice oil produced on February 10, 1968. Thus, the available data does confirm a diminution of PCB contamination of the rice oil with time. This is summarized below:

Date	Source	PCB content (ppm)	Method
Feb. 5, 1968	canned	2000-3000	organic Cl
Feb. 5 or 6, 1968	canned (?)	ca 1000	GLC/MS
Feb. 7, 1968	bottled	924	organic Cl
Feb. 10, 1968	bottled	134	?
After Feb. 11 1968	bottled	just detectable	GLC (?)

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The resolution of the varying PCB values for the canned oil cannot be made. However, Kuratsune (1976) confirmed that the production of rice oil had been suspended for an unknown period of time prior to February 6, 1968, when it resumed.

2. Dose-Response

There were 1291 "Yusho" patients as of April 30, 1975 Oeme, 1975). Of this total group, the dose-response relationship was developed from a detailed analysis of 146 patients (Yoshimura 1971; Kuratsune et al., 1972). Those 146 patients all consumed contaminated canned rice oil produced on February 5, 1968 contained 2000 to 3000 ppm PCBs as Kanechlor 400 (Tsukamota et al., (1972) estimated that the lowest dose producing symptoms was 0.5 gm.

If the PCB content of this canned oil was ca 1000 ppm, as discussed in the previous section, then the average dose producing an overt effect was 0.8 gm. and the lowest dose producing an overt effect was 0.2 gm.

3. Causative Factors.

Originally, rice oil contaminated with a heat exchanger, Kanechlor 400, a polychlorinated biphenyl, was associated with "Yusho" symptomatology (see discussion in section

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1 above). PCBs were identified in the contaminated rice oil consumed and in the blood and tissues of Yusho patients. Therefore, the effects seen were attributed to PCBs.

In the review by Kuratsune et al., (1976), a new factor was introduced into the system; namely, the canned rice oil was also contaminated with chlorinated dibenzofurans to the extent of 5 ppm. In addition, in this same paper by Kuratsune et al., (1976), they presented data of Nagayama et al., showing polychlorinated dibenzofurans in the liver and adipose tissue of Yusho patients, while none was found in that of a control group. The ratio of PCBs to PCDFs in Kanechlor 400, a Yusho oil of February 5 or 6, 1968, in adipose tissue and liver from a Yusho patient were 50,000; 200; 144; and 4 respectively. Thus, relative to Yusho oil, the liver with a PCB/PCDF ratio of 4 to 1, appears to selectively concentrate PCDFs relative to PCBs.

Relative to PCBs, PCDFs are about 250 times higher in the rice oil than in Kanechlor 400 (Nagayama et al., 1975b; Kuratsune et al., 1976).[1] They also stated that PCDFs may be a factor in Yusho disease. In another

[1] It should be noted that we are comparing chlorinated dibenzofuran content of an unused Kanechlor 400 to that after prolonged use in a heat exchanger.

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paper Nagayama et al., (1975a) reported that it "is said that the toxicity of PCDF is said to be from 200 to 500 times that of PCB". At the lower factor (200), contaminated rice oil would be expected to be twice as toxic as Kanechlor 400. Also, in this same paper they stated that the symptoms seen in Yusho patients seemed to be more severe than would be expected just from the PCB intake associated with the oil.

If PCDF is 200 to 500 times more toxic than PCB (Nagayama et al., 1975a), then contaminated rice oil would be 2 to 3.5 times more toxic than that expected from its PCB content, alone. Kuratsune et al., (1972), estimated that if the average amount of contaminated rice oil ingested by a "Yusho" exposed person, is related solely in terms of its PCB equivalent, then the amount of oil needed to be ingested, on that basis, would be 1600 ml to 2800 ml. At a PCB content of 2500 ppm, this is an ingestion of 4 to 7 gm of PCDs equivalent; whereas at a PCB content of 1000 ppm, this is an ingestion of 1.6 to 2.8 gm of PCDs equivalent.

Conclusion

The complexities and uncertainties associated with the most recent reports of the "Yusho" incident in Japan, make it extremely difficult to quantify possible human health effects resulting from exposure to PCBs alone.

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V. Occupational Exposure to PCBs

The earliest reports of adverse health effects due to exposure of workers to PCBs in this country are probably those of Schwartz (1936) who described skin lesions and symptoms of systemic poisoning among workers who were said to have inhaled chloro diphenyls; their complaints included digestive disturbances, burning of the eyes, impotence, and hematuria. Patch tests with the chlorodiphenyls were negative, and Schwartz speculated that mechanical plugging of the follicles of the skin as the fumes solidified on it were responsible for the skin lesions; the chlorine present in the products were thought to then exert an irritating effect on the plugged follicles, and to thus cause suppuration. No quantitative data were reported, but a number of preventive practices were recommended.

There have been numerous reports over the ensuing years (Schwartz and Bartow, 1942), (Greenburg et al., 1939), (Drinkes et al., 1937), (Good et al., 1943), (Schwartz, 1943) and (Meigs, et al., 1954) of cutaneous eruptions and of systemic manifestations (sometimes fatal) as well, among marine electricians, machinists, capacitor and transformer manufacturing workers, and others occupationally exposed to PCBs. However, in many of these reports the exposures are described as having been to mixtures of chlorinated hydrocarbons, quite often of chlorinated naphthalenes and PCBs.

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