

NEWS

Monsanto

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NIOSH Feb

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MONSANTO STUDY SHOWS NO WORKPLACE-RELATED CANCER PROBLEM AT SPRINGFIELD PLANT

ST. LOUIS, March 28 -- Monsanto Company today released to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) a completed worker health study which the company said indicates there is no workplace-related cancer problem at the company's Springfield, Mass., plant.

Monsanto said its study was based on an analysis of 564 death certificates of former plant employees. "Our study does not show statistically significant increases for any of several major causes of death we studied," George Roush, M.D., Director of Monsanto's Department of Medicine and Environmental Health, said. "We found 118 cancer related deaths vs. 117 expected using the Hampden County experience."

Dr. Roush said the study did indicate, however, marginal increases in two cancer subcategories, genital and digestive. "Since these two categories were slightly higher than expected, we followed up with case history studies to see if we could find a workplace relationship. These studies show that the deceased employees had worked in a wide variety of locations in the plant, with no significant concentration in any one area. The small numbers of organ specific cancer cases in each location would not permit statistically feasible case control studies. We found no relationship between the pattern of former employee cancer deaths and exposure to any process or chemical," Dr. Roush said.

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The study was initiated in response to a 1975 complaint that there was an excess of cancer of the pancreas at the plant. As a result, both Monsanto and NIOSH conducted studies. The Monsanto study was based on 564 death certificates vs. 441 death certificates used in the NIOSH study. In addition, the results of the Monsanto study were compared with the Hampden County population where the Monsanto plant is located. The NIOSH analysis was compared to the national population experience. Monsanto said no increase was seen in deaths from pancreatic cancer, and that the overall number of cancer deaths was not significantly different than what would be expected for the Hampden County population.

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