



University of Pittsburgh

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Biostatistics

September 11, 1981

Dr. Susan Austin
Union Carbide Corporation
Medical Department
270 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Susan:

I looked over the two drafts of the letter that is being prepared for the employees of Texas City. They both have a slight defensive flavor. In the draft prepared by Tom Lincoln and yourself I would not say that the small cluster of brain tumors arose by chance alone. While in the draft by Hoerger it is not true that there was no overall excess due to primary malignant brain cancer. There were, in fact, 4 or 5 excess deaths. Also I wouldn't say that the excess in the subgroup of employees who worked at the plant at least 6 months was comparatively small. I think 8 vs. 2.37 is a fairly large excess.

I have given some thought of how this should be presented and would suggest the following be included in the presentation (if true):

"Of 6588 employees who worked at Texas City since the start-up date in 1941, there are 4 or 5 cases of brain cancer that could not be explained by normal background brain cancer rates. We believe that this may represent a chance occurrence and that these cases are not due to chemical exposures at our plant. There are three reasons why we believe this. First, unlike other cases of occupational cancer, we have not been able to associate these brain cancer cases with any particular chemical exposure. Second, unlike other cases of occupational cancer, the type of brain cancer is no different than the type seen in the general population. Ordinarily chemically caused cancer is a specific and often unusual type, while the kinds of brain cancer seen at Texas City are no different than those seen in the general population. Finally, brain cancer has not been observed in chemical plants similar to ours in other parts of the country."

I think the text should also emphasize to the employees that a search is being made to see if similar plants

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elsewhere are having a problem and that the situation in Texas City is being carefully monitored by Union Carbide and the federal government. Also, that the federal government will make an individual judgment and that when this is available Union Carbide will see their employees are fully informed of this.

I hope this is helpful.

Sincerely,



Philip E. Enterline
Professor and Chairman

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