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FROM: RAMLOW, JONATHAN M.
SUBJECT: "Vinyl Chloride/Early Life Exposure"

The May 3 issue of Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News carried an item describing a presentation by James Coglianò of the EPA at a conference on risk assessment for sensitive populations. He apparently discussed vinyl chloride in terms of increased cancer risk associated with exposure of very young animals, in which the risk is expressed in adult life. One of the statements attributed to him was that "brief exposure" in early life "can induce unseen tumors and higher incidence of apparent tumors following long-term exposure later in life."

The story did not indicate the basis for Coglianò's remarks, but he must have been referring at least to the following: Maltoni et al., Env. Health Perspect 1981;41:3-29; Drew et al., Toxicol Appl Pharmacol 1983;68:120-30; and Maltoni & Cotti, Ann NY Acad Sci 1988;534:145-59. All of these papers report results of carcinogenicity assays in animals exposed prenatally or in early life.

I've asked Has Shah at CMA to communicate with Coglianò and find out more about the context in which he spoke and the data he was referring to. We may want to review the available data ourselves and then offer comments to EPA if and when appropriate.

Finally, this issue may make it advisable to consider again the proposal we received from Dr. James Swenberg to conduct some experimental work looking at the efficiency of DNA repair mechanisms in young and old animals. His thinking has been that if young animals are more susceptible to VC carcinogenic effects than older animals, it will be because their DNA repair mechanisms do not work as well as in the adults. Currently this proposal has been tabled by the VC Panel Health Committee. If we can find out more about where EPA may be going with this issue, I will ask for your input again about Swenberg's proposal.

Please write or call if you have any questions about this matter.

Jonathan Ramlow

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