

Construction workers at DOE nuclear sites show higher risk of cancer, asbestosis

Mortality of older construction and craft workers employed at Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear sites: Follow-up through 2011

Knut Ringen, John Dement, Laura Welch, Eula Bingham, Patricia Quinn, Anna Chen and Scott Haas. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, February 2015.

Overview

CPWR administers the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed.org) for former construction workers who have been employed at more than 20 DOE-operated nuclear sites. The study population included 18,803 construction workers enrolled in BTMed between 1998 and 2011. Their average age at enrollment was about 62 years. National Death index records indicate that as of 2011, 2,801 enrollees had died.

Key Findings

- DOE construction workers had a significantly increased risk of death from all causes compared to other Americans of a similar age, even though they were less likely to die from common causes such as heart disease and diabetes.
- DOE construction workers had a very high risk of cancers. The list of cancers that DOE construction workers are more likely to have matches closely the list of radiation cancers approved for compensation in the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act.
- DOE construction workers experienced 43% more lung cancer deaths than other Americans, and to address this need BTMed has established a very advanced early lung cancer detection program which should lead to lower rates of death from lung cancer in the future.
- The risks are not limited to workers employed during the early years of the atomic weapons program. The risks persist for workers first employed after 1980. Continued medical screening will be important for the health of this population.

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See full report:

<http://bit.ly/1F9YR0e>

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