

EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDIES

RICHARD A. LEMEN

Essentially what we want to do in the remaining time we have this afternoon is to outline for you some of the mechanisms and what we plan on doing as far as an industry-wide study for the styrene-butadiene rubber industry.

As I indicated this morning, we are microfilming the records of the two plants, B. F. Goodrich and Texas-U.S. Chemical, in Port Neches and we have almost completed the microfilming of these records. We want to do an indepth study of these facilities. The reason that we want to do this instead of going to the Social Security Administration as Dr. Wagoner indicated, is that we can get a very detailed occupational history through the company records that we are microfilming from each facility to see if there is any specific area of the plant where there may be a clustering or an association with the leukemia or, for that matter, any other excess deaths that we may encounter.

The second thing that we are planning on doing is an industrial hygiene survey of both the B. F. Goodrich Plant and the Texas-U.S. Chemical Plant. We will be doing this probably the latter part of May. This indepth industrial hygiene survey is to ascertain the exact chemicals and the concentrations that have been found in the past and are currently being found in the plant.

The mechanism that we will use for our mortality study is to microfilm the records, bring them back to NIOSH to set up a master file, and then to use various follow-up techniques to complete the data. As I mentioned to you this morning we will use the State of Texas Vital Statistics Office and their Motor Vehicle Office for follow-up. The Social Security Administration certainly will be used as will the Post Office. Followup by these multifaceted techniques for a study of this nature is going to take about six to eight months. Whereas with the Social Security System, using the mechanism that Dr. Wagoner just showed you, it

could be done in a much shorter amount of time; however, we would not get the indepth occupational history that we will get from the study of these two facilities in Texas.

Lastly, we have received a request to go to the American Synthetic Rubber Company in Kentucky to do medical screening tests; as a result of what we have heard today and as a result of what we have seen with vinyl chloride, we are going to be planning on doing not only a blood screening test program, but a much broader type screening and possibly even looking at the chromosome anomalies that could exist in a situation like this. So, this is basically in two minutes as Dr. Lloyd asked me to make it, what we are planning on doing and if there are any questions, we can entertain those for just a minute or so at the present time.

QUESTION:

I would like to ask a procedural question. Would some of you define what you mean by the styrene-butadiene industry, what your confines are of that?

MR. LEMEN:

The styrene-butadiene rubber industry is what we are looking at. Is that an answer to your question?

QUESTION:

The manufacturing of this material or —

MR. LEMEN:

Yes. To my knowledge. Maybe Mr. Baier can clarify that further, but that is what we are planning on at the present time. That's where we're concentrating our efforts. Will you comment on that, Dr. Wagoner?

DR. WAGONER:

Yes, as I indicated earlier, based on the Mount Sinai data, I think it would be an irresponsible act on the part of the U.S. Government as well

as industry not to undertake an investigation of the styrene facilities.

QUESTION:

How about butadiene?

DR. WAGONER:

I would welcome your endorsement of that also. I might put the question back — what do you people and industry feel is the posture as to what studies are needed to be undertaken?

MR. ZACK:

Matthew Zack from the Center for Disease Control. With respect to the proposal to use the Social Security records, I'm wondering whether the Social Security Administration will give out those records any more after the Privacy Act of 1974. It has been very difficult to get any information from the Social Security System. Both those studies that were shown on the board were done before 1974.

DR. LLOYD:

Let me clarify what it is that Dr. Wagoner was talking about.

Ordinarily, the Social Security Administration will not give out any information on specific companies. It is forbidden under the recent legislation, just as they will not give out any information on live individuals. With the consent of the individual firm in writing, they will provide such information, and what Dr. Wagoner has suggested is that the individual companies involved here would be asked to give such consent so that he could go to the Social Security Administration and they could identify the firm by their coded number and thus, provide us with information on which individuals who had been employed at those plants had died so we might recover the death certificates.

Dr. Wagoner says he's asking for the endorsement of that by the companies here today. Is there anybody who would like to respond for the companies? I now call for response by the corporations and unions to this overall NIOSH study proposal. Could I even get a comment as to what you people think of this study proposal?

MR. CONTESSA:

Mr. Chairman, I'm Matt Contessa from the URW

Local Number 5. I would like to suggest that studies be taken in the benzene area also.

DR. LLOYD:

This is a question that was mentioned earlier and I think we would have a much more difficult problem there because of the widespread use of benzene in many plants. It would be very difficult to identify the plants.

MR. SAMUELS:

You asked for a response from us and, of course, we support Dr. Wagoner's suggestion with perhaps the additional element that the Social Security Administration also administers a disability program and, perhaps, this would give us some morbidity data, but we certainly endorse what you are doing, Joe, and I might say that it was not the legislative intent of the Privacy Act to deprive the government and other legitimate investigators of this kind of epidemiological data.

DR. LLOYD:

Thank you. All right, now I think that should conclude what we originally intended for this morning's session. This afternoon's session, which will begin now, on recommended intervention will be chaired by the Deputy Director. Before Mr. Baier, one point from Mr. Lemen.

MR. LEMEN:

In response to the question about doing a benzene study, I would just like to indicate that we do have two plants under study right now. We are looking at the benzene very vigorously and, if you have some more questions, why I'd be glad to talk to you after the meeting is over and tell you exactly what we are doing.

MR. CONTESSA:

Thank you. And another comment — I forgot to say that as far as the membership of Local 5, we completely and fully endorse any studies, any studies that are to be held and, again, I say that you could have the cooperation of our local — whatever we could make available to you that would help.

DR. LLOYD:

Thank you. Now for some comments on recommended intervention, chaired by our Deputy Director, Mr. Ed Baier.

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