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A Historical Survey of Key Epidemiological Studies of Ionizing Radiation Exposure

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In this article we review the history of key epidemiological studies of populations exposed to ionizing radiation. We highlight historical and recent findings regarding radiation-associated risks for incidence and mortality of cancer and non-cancer outcomes with emphasis on study design and methods of exposure assessment and dose estimation along with brief consideration of sources of bias for a few of the more important studies. We examine the findings from the epidemiological studies of the Japanese atomic bomb survivors, persons exposed to radiation for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, those exposed to environmental sources including Chornobyl and other reactor accidents, and occupationally exposed cohorts. We also summarize results of pooled studies. These summaries are necessarily brief, but we provide references to more detailed information. We discuss possible future directions of study, to include assessment of susceptible populations, and possible new populations, data sources, study designs and methods of analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Within a year of the discovery of X rays in 1895, the first few cases of radiation-associated erythemal and other acute effects of radiation exposure were documented (one case being Thomas Edison) (*1*, *2*) and a few years later a radiation induced skin cancer was reported in a worker at a factory making X-ray tubes (*3*). A few years after its discovery radiation was being used for medical diagnosis and therapy, and after World War II there was an increasingly large number of workers exposed at various steps of the nuclear fuel production and use cycle, including uranium mining and processing, nuclear weapons production and power generation. While the growth in exposures from artificial sources of radiation exposure attracts most attention, naturally occurring radiation, in particular, the inhalation of radon and its decay products is a common source of exposure to the general population. Many of the exposed populations have been studied to assess risks of a variety of cancers and other serious health effects, and these studies, particularly of the survivors of the two atomic bombings in Japan have been instrumental in establishing radiation safety standards (*4*).

The present article surveys the history of the major epidemiological studies of radiation-exposed groups. We shall concentrate attention on studies in which risks can be assessed in relation to dose, generally organ dose. However, we also include studies of groups exposed to radon and certain exposures to high-linear energy transfer (LET)

radiation, where risks have been evaluated in relation to time integrated activity (e.g., Bq m^{-3} y^{-1}) or in the case of miners exposed to radon, working level months. We do not consider the various studies of radium dial workers (*5*, *6*) or the studies of persons who received the diagnostic contrast medium Thorotrast (*7*), in which generally risks have been estimated in relation only to administered activity. A critical part of many of the studies that we include in the review is the assessment of radiation dose to the relevant organs or tissues, which we discuss first. We then consider the findings from epidemiological studies of the Japanese atomic bomb survivors, persons exposed medically to radiation for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, those exposed to environmental sources including Chornobyl and other reactor accidents, and occupationally exposed cohorts. We also summarize results of pooled studies. In all sections we provide a historical overview of the field and concentrate attention on the most current and informative studies, whilst calling attention where relevant, for the more important studies, to possible sources of bias; more detailed assessments of study strengths and weaknesses are given elsewhere (*8–11*). We conclude with discussion of possible future directions of study, to include assessment of susceptible populations, persons exposed to radiation sources not previously or well-studied, and new data sources and methods of analysis. In all that follows, unless stated to the contrary all quoted results are statistically significant (two-sided $P \leq 0.05$). In a few cases we refer to borderline significant findings (two-sided $0.05 < P \leq 0.1$).

IONIZING RADIATION DOSIMETRY FOR EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES

Radiation dose is of fundamental importance to radiation epidemiology because of the interest in quantifying the relationship between organ dose and occurrence of radiation associated disease. Radiation absorbed dose is defined as the absorbed energy per unit mass of the irradiated material where tissues and body organs are of primary interest to epidemiology. To support radiological protection as well as radiation epidemiology, the discipline of dosimetry has evolved which is based on our understanding of the physics of radiation interactions with matter. The application of dosimetry is usually termed dose assessment or dose reconstruction. The scientific underpinnings of radiation dosimetry (*12–16*) and application of dosimetry to organ dose estimation for exposed individuals are described in detail elsewhere (*16*, *17*). Briefly, radiation dosimetry is based on the theories of energy transfer from indirectly ionizing radiation to directly ionizing radiation which occurs through a cascade of interactions in tissue by the release of photoelectrons followed by Compton scattering. Through those processes, the incident energy is dissipated in the tissue and is the basis for organ radiation dose and radiation damage. Given that it is impossible to directly measure the deposition of radiation energy in human tissue, quantifying these processes, which is based on our understanding of physics, necessarily involves calculation, although calculations are often supported by measurements. Those measurements may be individualized to persons, such as by personal dosimeters worn on the outside of the body to estimate dose from external radiations that penetrate tissue, or bioassay measurements of radionuclides deposited in the body, such as measurements of excreted radionuclides in urine or feces. Another type of measurement of radiations emitted by internally deposited radionuclides is a bioassay of γ rays emitted by various radionuclides (e.g., ^{137}Cs) using whole-body monitoring or by radioiodines in the thyroid using radiation detectors placed near the neck of the subject. Estimates of absorbed energy in tissue (i.e., dose) may also be derived from calculations that first quantify the intake rate of radioactive materials through ingestion and inhalation. Calculations at the whole-body or organ level for internal and external dose are accomplished with mathematical descriptions of the geometry and composition of the human body (phantoms), again using principles of radiation physics described by probabilities of various interactions that radiations undergo as they pass through air and penetrate human tissue. In the case of internally deposited radionuclides, the calculations must track units of radionuclide as they enter the body and are metabolized by the body, up to the point of excretion. Bearing in mind that radionuclides reside in the body for characteristic times, data on the metabolism of the element and chemical form involved in a particular radionuclide must be used. Although some calculations are done with deterministic methods using equations, many modern calculations are done with Monte Carlo methods that probabilistically track theoretical individual particles as they propagate. In this section, we discuss how dosimetry has been applied for purposes of epidemiology for ionizing radiation.

Dosimetry for the Japanese Atomic Bomb Survivors

Dose estimation for survivors of the atomic bombs in Japan in 1945 has played a crucial role in epidemiological studies whose findings have laid the foundation for radiological protection in many countries. Dose estimation for atomic bomb survivors is primarily based on self-reported information on location in conjunction with estimates of air kerma (a close approximation of the dose to air) at the location of each exposed person because of prompt γ rays and neutrons released in the detonation, also slightly later arising radiation (mostly within about 1 min) from the fireball (*18*, *19*). Accounting for building and body shielding allows for the estimation of whole-body dose.

Because location of survivors at the time of the detonation is critical to dose estimation, many of the survivors from the bombings were interviewed from the late 1940s onwards, and especially during the 1950s, to establish their exact position in the two cities (Hiroshima and Nagasaki), as well as the direction they were facing relative to the bombs and location on drawings of neighboring shielding

structures (shielding histories). A number of initial individual dose estimates were constructed based on this information, beginning in the late 1950s using the Tentative 1957 Dosimetry (T57D) system (*20*), and in the mid-1960s the Tentative 1965 Dosimetry (T65D) and a slightly revised T65DR dosimetry (*21*). The T65DR doses implied a substantial neutron component of the dose, particularly in Hiroshima, and this in turn led to the realization in the late 1970s that T65DR neutron doses were too high, implying that neutron relative biological effectiveness (RBE) used in the calculations was higher than had been previously assumed. Partly as a result, a revised set of estimates via the Dosimetry System 1986 (DS86), were produced (*18*) which yielded very much lower estimates of neutron dose. DS86 used new calculations of radiation emission and transport in an air-over-ground environment based on first principles of radiation physics (*18*, *22*). DS86 created model house clusters and detailed calculations of shielding at a number of positions inside and outside the houses that could be adapted by combinatorics to the shielding history data that had been collected on survivors. DS86 also calculated body self-shielding for the first time, using a set of three phantoms (infant, child, adult) constructed of basic geometrical shapes and calculating dose to 15 different organs (*18*, *22*). Due primarily to a controversy about neutron activation measurements in environmental samples in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a further refinement was Dosimetry System 2002 (DS02) (*19*). DS02 recalculated the source term and radiation transport with the latest methods, including changes in the estimated yields and heights of burst of the bombs, and took account of measurements of environmental samples that had been made in Hiroshima and Nagasaki by thermoluminescent dosimetry (γ-ray dose) and neutron activation analysis (*18*). DS02 in turn was modified by an extensive review and collation of various versions of survivor shielding data, resulting in DS02R1, the largest source of changes in dosimetry resulting from improved assessment of terrain shielding (*23*). Recent work using updated (and more realistic) phantoms in the Life Span Study (LSS) cohort suggested doses could be up to 20% different for certain organs, with more substantial changes in neutron dose (*24*).

There is so little neutron exposure in the LSS from DS86 onwards that inference on neutron relative biological effectiveness (RBE) is quite problematic. Little (*25*) and Cordova and Cullings (*26*) highlight the quite large central estimates of RBE, albeit with substantial uncertainties, that can be obtained. Care must be taken, as was done in both these studies, to make sure that inferences on neutron RBE are not confounded by city differences. Hafner et al. (*27*) illustrate how very high assumed neutron RBEs can lower the risk estimate, and also change the shape of the dose response for certain cancer endpoints. In most current analyses weighted absorbed dose (gamma dose + 10 $\times$ neutron dose) is used (*23*, *28–39*).

Dosimetry Methods for Medical Radiation Procedures

Patient exposure from diagnostic radiation procedures. External diagnostic X-ray procedures include radiography, fluoroscopy (both diagnostic and interventional), and computed tomography (CT). Calculating organ doses for patients undergoing these diagnostic and therapeutic procedures relies heavily on pre-calculated organ dose conversion coefficients. The coefficients are applied to simplified dose descriptors commonly used as operational quantities in clinical settings: dose or kerma area product (DAP or KAP) for radiography and fluoroscopy, and CT dose index (CTDI) for CT scans. For patients undergoing diagnostic or therapeutic procedures more recently, the necessary dose descriptors can be obtained from medical records or from patient electronic files. Monte Carlo radiation transport techniques, coupled with computerized human anatomy models (*40*) are employed to derive conversion coefficients for various exposure scenarios and geometries (*41–44*) and CT (*40*, *45–49*). More complicated methods with greater associated uncertainties in individual doses need to be applied for estimation of doses from diagnostic radiation procedures in historical cohorts (*50*). The Massachusetts tuberculosis (TB) fluoroscopy study (*51*) included medical record abstraction, physician interview, patient contact, and calendar year specific machine exposure measurements. The methodology considered breast size and composition, patient orientation, X-ray field size and location, beam quality, type of examination, machine exposure rate, and exposure time during fluoroscopic examinations (*51*). Computerized human anatomy models could be used with adjustments for specific conditions of exposed populations (*52–54*).

Patient exposure from therapeutic radiation procedures. External beam radiotherapy (RT) planning involves calculating radiation doses for tumor and nearby tissues. Two crucial components in dose reconstruction for radiotherapy patients are (i) dose calculation algorithms and (ii) human anatomy models. Dose calculation algorithms fall into three categories: measurement-based dose matrix, analytical dose calculation algorithms, and Monte Carlo radiation transport algorithms. The first involves physical dose measurements in water or in air as produced by linear accelerators (LINACs) (*55*, *56*). The second is analytical dose calculation methods (*57*, *58*) which are widely used in treatment planning but may not be suitable for regions far from treatment fields. The third is Monte Carlo radiation transport techniques (*59–61*). The second component of dosimetry for radiotherapy patients involves patient anatomy models, ranging from simplistic mathematical models (*55*, *56*) to realistic image-based computational human models (*40*, *60*) and patient-specific CT images used for treatment planning. In recent decades, a range of combinations involving dose calculation algorithms and patient anatomy models, as mentioned earlier, have been utilized in epidemiological investigations following up patients

who underwent radiotherapy for cancer and other late serious health effects.

Patient exposure from diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine procedures. Dosimetry methods for patients undergoing nuclear medicine procedures derive from the Medical Internal Radiation Dose (MIRD) formalism for radionuclide energy spectra, which was first introduced in the 1960s (*62*) and has continuously updated (*63–66*) nuclide energy spectrum. Biokinetic data, outlining the radionuclide distribution in the human anatomy, is derived from multi-compartmental models and a system of linear differential equations that are provided by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) publications (*67–69*). Energy transfer data within the human anatomy are obtained from computational human anatomy models, employing Monte Carlo radiation transport techniques (*70*, *71*). The third component, radionuclide energy spectra, is established in ICRP Publication 107 (*72*). Various tools for organ dose calculations, based on these three dosimetry components, are available for dosimetrists to utilize in epidemiological studies of nuclear medicine patients (*73–79*).

Dosimetry for Medical Workers Studies

Occupational exposure to medical radiation primarily occurs during diagnostic radiology, although particularly high doses are incurred via interventional fluoroscopy and nuclear medicine procedures, where physicians, nurses or radiological technologists work in close proximity to radiation sources (*80*). The reconstruction of organ doses for medical radiological personnel relies on several factors, including work history, personal dosemeters, and organ dose conversion coefficients. Work history information can be gathered through surveys administered to study subjects while measurements using thermoluminescent dosemeters (TLDs), film badges, and electronic personal dosemeters (EPDs) are often placed on the worker's body to assess radiation exposure. Organ dose conversion coefficients for occupational exposure (*81–83*) are determined through computer simulations that consider various exposure geometries and X-ray characteristics distinct from those encountered in diagnostic X-ray patients. Simon et al. (*84*) describes in detail the application of work history, use of personal dosemeters, organ dose coefficients, and shielding provided by protective lead aprons to a cohort of radiological technologists, as does Yoder et al. (*85*, *86*) in another group of medical radiation workers.

Dosimetry for Nuclear Workers Studies

Dose estimation for workers in nuclear industries is also an important application of dose reconstruction techniques and in ways similar to dose estimation for other radiation sources, it embodies calculations necessary to characterize both external and internal exposures. Nuclear worker studies are often advantaged by having individual measurements of radiation exposure derived from personal dosemeters (external exposure) and, in some cases, bioassay or whole-body counting data (internal exposure) (*87*). In general, most but not all historical studies (*88*) have used recorded doses as a proxy for organ absorbed dose (*87*). Bioassay information is sometimes available, though usually only for the most highly exposed workers. When bioassay data are available, dose estimates are derived from generalized radionuclide-specific biokinetic models that are published by international authorities or are developed in special occupational circumstances using bioassays, biokinetic models, and autopsy evaluations of radiation workers (*89*, *90*). In ways similar to dose reconstruction for medical workers, the main considerations for dose estimation include work history, data from personal dosemeters, and organ dose conversion coefficients. Work history would include job type(s), the possible exposure modalities (external vs. internal), time spent exposed, worker orientation (for some studies) and the type and degree of safety precautions utilized. A recent National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) report details how dose calculations in two workforces with exposure to a mixture of low-LET and high-LET radiation can be used to evaluate radiation risk (*88*).

Dosimetry for Exposures from Naturally Occurring Radiation

Naturally occurring radiation which potentially exposes people includes (i) γ rays emitted from the decay of radionuclides in the earth's crust and from within our own bodies, in particular, from radionuclides that are part of the well-known uranium and thorium decay chains and from potassium-40 (*91*), (ii) from the radioactive gases radon and thoron, which are created when other naturally occurring elements undergo radioactive decay, and from (iii) space, i.e., cosmic radiation. Exposure to naturally occurring radiation (*92*, *93*) occurs for most people during normal living and working situations though exposures can also be enhanced by participation in certain occupations, e.g., enhanced doses to the lungs from radon and its progeny can be received by uranium miners, and enhanced whole-body doses from cosmic rays can be received by those working at higher-than-typical altitudes, e.g., aircrew and spacecrew (astronauts) (*94*).

Radon

The causal association between radon and lung cancer results from alpha particles released by the decay of two of its progeny, ^{218}Po (half-life $\sim$3 min) and ^{214}Po (half-life $\sim$0.0002 s) (*95*). While radon is a gas, these progeny are particulate and a variable proportion bind with other matter in the air in the so-called "attached fraction" (*95*). The critical malignancy-causing dose of α energy is delivered by progeny that have deposited on the bronchial epithelium. The α particles released by the two polonium progeny have sufficient energy to penetrate to cells in the basal layer of

the epithelium and damage their DNA. The pattern of deposition varies with the size of the particles in the attached fraction, along with the rate and depth of breathing. Deposition varies between children and adults (*95*). Lung dosimetry models have long been available to calculate the dose of α energy delivered to the lung, given the concentration of inhaled radon progeny. Consideration of lung dosimetry is critical in extrapolating risks from studies of underground miners to exposures indoors; however, there are more direct estimates of risks from indoor radon exposure (*96*, *97*).

Cosmic and Other Non-Radon Terrestrial Radiation

The variations of doses received by the public primarily reflect the variations in the intensity of the sources at the location of exposure. For external dose from terrestrial radiation the sources include the local or regional concentrations of uranium and thoron in the soil and in the construction materials of residences (e.g., bricks made from earthen materials). For lung dose from domestic radon the source is the local concentration of radium and thoron in the soil coupled with the ventilation characteristics of the home. For cosmic rays the source is primarily the altitude of residence, but also latitude on the earth's surface and the episodic occurrence of solar flares. Proportionally greater intensity of the radiation environment generally leads to proportionately greater doses. Assessments need to account for factors such as age, location, building ventilation rates, and construction types. Assessment of exposures to radiation from naturally occurring sources, is enhanced by substantial measurements which are possible using numerous types of monitoring devices. In terms of complexity of assessing doses from natural radiation, external dose is clearly the simplest. Determination of internal dose is complicated by attributes of ventilation, particle sizes in the air, and more complex radioactive decay schemes. Estimation of doses from cosmic rays, in contrast, is significantly more complex because of the interactions of high energy particles from space with the components of the earth's atmosphere (*94*) (https://www.epa.gov/radtown/cosmic-radiation).

Dosimetry for People Exposed due to Releases of Radioactivity to the Environment

Since the beginning of the atomic era (1945–) there have been three large-scale releases of radioactivity from reactor accidents into the environment - Kyshtym (i.e., Mayak, 1957) (*98*), Chornobyl (1986) (*99*) and Fukushima (2011) (*100*) while there have been other, less substantial accidental releases of radioactivity at sites including Windscale (1957) (*101*) and Three Mile Island (1979) (*102*). There were also other major releases, e.g., Hanford (1944–1957) (*103*), and Techa river (1949–1956) (*104*, *105*).

The dosimetry methods used to evaluate doses received by populations exposed to radioactivity released to the environment from sites such as nuclear reactors must account for attributes of the radioactive material released (e.g., particle sizes, solubility), and attributes of the population (e.g., lifestyle, age distribution) and wind direction and weather conditions. Details of the dose assessments, i.e., models and parameter values, are largely determined by the important modes of exposure and pathways, e.g., external exposure and internal exposure due to inhalation and/or ingestion including contamination of the food chain. The opportunities for collection of data about the exposed population will determine, in part, the level of detail which can be built into exposure assessment models.

The Chornobyl accident released a broad mix of fission products including heavy and large particles which were deposited in the near vicinity of the reactor while volatile elements like iodine or cesium migrated for thousands of kilometers. These various attributes are accounted for in the dose assessment models by radionuclide-specific parameter values.

An important study cohort for the Chornobyl accident, as well as for releases at other facilities, are children exposed to radioactive iodine released to the atmosphere. The main pathway of intake was consumption of contaminated milk and fresh dairy products because of contamination of pasture grass eaten by dairy animals. A reconstruction of individual thyroid doses was based on thyroid activity measurements and application of ecological models of transfer of iodine radioisotopes, both of which are used to estimate the concentration of radioactivity in foods ingested by children (*106*). Those data combined with individual estimates of the consumption rates of milk and other foodstuffs collected through personal interviews with the subjects or their parents, allowed for dose estimation. Models to estimate the ingested radioactivity by children were calibrated and validated using measurement data of the radiation emitted from the thyroid of children who had consumed contaminated food products.

Dose assessment for the subjects of the nested case-control studies of leukemia and related disorders (*107*, *108*) and of thyroid cancer (*109*) in the Ukrainian Chornobyl cleanup workers, and in the studies of germline mutations in offspring of occupationally exposed (Ukrainian cleanup workers) parents (*110*) was performed using analytical ("time-and-motion") methods (*111*), where subjects' whereabouts were accounted for by use of data derived from personal interviews with subjects, next-of-kin or colleague proxies and superimposed with data on dose rates attributed to particular workplaces and time periods.

One of the more important groups studied in relation to man-made environmental exposure is the Techa River cohort residing downstream of Mayak in the Southern Urals in Russia. The dosimetry of the persons exposed living near the Techa River in the 1950s and subsequently followed up for mortality and cancer incidence have been subject to a number of increasingly sophisticated (and more individualized) assessments, which make use of various types of environmental measurement data, combined

with whole-body counter measures of cohort members and questionnaire data on residence (*104*, *112*). A potentially important source of radiation exposure is medical diagnostic exposure, which is more intensive among those known to have larger environmental doses, and is not taken into account in the dosimetry (*112*).

Dosimetry for Exposures from Detonation and Testing of Nuclear Weapons in the Atmosphere

Exposures of the public from regional and global fallout deposition from nuclear testing occurred worldwide from 1945 through 1980 (*113*, *114*). Radiation dose estimations to populations living near to nuclear test sites in Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico, Kazakhstan and elsewhere have been conducted by accounting for exposure from external irradiation due to deposited radioactive fallout and from ingestion of food contaminated with radioactive fallout.

External radiation exposure and ingestion have been widely demonstrated to be the most important dose pathways. The less important pathways such as inhalation and immersion in contaminated air are discussed elsewhere (*115–117*). Because for most individuals exposed to fallout, there were no direct personal measurements of dose and because exposure rates from deposited fallout were sparse at most locations of residence, although there was monitoring at regular intervals at various locations (e.g., towns, ranches and roads), calculations rely both on the basic physics of radioactive decay as well as the use of extrapolation and interpolation of environmental measurement data and sometimes, atmospheric modeling.

The primary steps in the estimation of external and internal dose from fallout and the data required are diagrammed in figure 1 of Beck et al. (*118*). The essential elements for external dose estimation are a time-integration of the exposure-rate at the location of interest while the essential elements for internal dose estimation are accounting for radionuclide ingestion rates requiring measurement data or calculated values of radionuclide concentrations in plant and animal foods. Several publications illustrate variations of the methods for assessing doses from fallout exposures from aboveground nuclear testing to the populations of Nevada, the Marshall Islands, and New Mexico (*115–117*, *119–124*).

Several important factors for fallout exposure models have been developed and are either essential for a realistic fallout dose assessment, e.g., conversion factors from exposure rate to radionuclide ground deposition (*125–127*) or have served to improve the quality and reliability of fallout dose assessments, e.g., quantitative transfer factor for ^{131}I to mother's breast milk (*128*). Interception of particulate fallout on plants varies with distance from the detonation site (*117*), similar to resuspension and inhalation models (*117*). These factors and others are presented in a comprehensive dosimetry methodology for radioactive fallout (*117*, *129–133*).

Uncertainty

Uncertainty in dosimetry is a manifestation of the limitations of our knowledge of the true values of doses received or of values of parameters that are used in dose estimation. The root causes of uncertainty in estimated doses are lack of knowledge about the numerous factors required to estimate doses including individual variations (e.g., in biophysical clearance rates), measurement imprecision, the absence of relevant or specific information (e.g., the specific type of radionuclide individuals were exposed to), reliance on less than perfect information, and the necessity of making assumptions. While sources of uncertainty are usually described in conceptual terms, magnitudes of uncertainties are usually described using statistical formulations. Uncertainty is generally of two distinct types. Classical error is that in which the nominal (observed) dose is obtained by adding an error to the (unknown) true dose, with the error independent of the true dose (*134*). Berkson error is obtained when (unobserved) true dose is assumed obtained by adding an error to the nominal (observed) dose, the error in this case being independent of the nominal dose (*134*). Classical error generally results in the trend of effect with dose being biased towards the null, whereas Berkson error will generally not have any biasing effect on dose-effect trend, but will inflate confidence intervals for trend estimates (*134*). Both classical and Berkson errors can be shared (with some component of error common between individuals) or unshared (with no such error component in common).

The practical side to the theory of dosimetric uncertainty is uncertainty analysis which is the process of assessing the sources and magnitudes of the uncertainty of individual dose-rated factors and a determination of the total (combined) uncertainty of either individual organ or whole-body doses or the distribution of estimated doses to a cohort or a subgroup of a cohort. Uncertainty analysis today is an accepted component of dose estimation for epidemiological studies as it is key to understanding the limitations of the dose estimates used for risk analysis. There are many treatises available on mathematical uncertainty analysis and error propagation with several focused specifically on radiation dose and radiation risk assessment (*11*, *16*, *88*, *135–137*). A significant component of uncertainty in epidemiology is associated with the exposure conditions and attributes of the exposed population in addition to pathways of exposure and the principles of physics. For these reasons, uncertainties must also reflect unknowns about human attributes, e.g., lifestyle and diet.

The basic methodology for estimating uncertainties in radiation dosimetry is to (i) catalog the sources of uncertainty with particular attention given to those which most significantly affect the estimated doses, (ii) characterize the uncertainty of each of those sources in mathematical terms, and (iii) propagate uncertainty through the dose algorithm in a similar way to the dose calculation itself. The most common methods to implement error propagation have

been analytical error propagation and in more recent decades, Monte Carlo simulations. There are subtleties in Monte Carlo sampling that pertain to properly sampling dose model parameter distributions depending on whether they represent random or systematic errors. The two-dimensional Monte Carlo (2DMC) method (*138*) presents the required sampling strategies for both random and systematic errors. (We discuss this and other methods for dealing with the effects of measurement errors in the "Future Statistical Methods" section below.)

Some generalizations are possible about the magnitude of uncertainties found in studies of different sources of exposure. In general, three factors largely determine the relative magnitude of dosimetric uncertainties: (i) whether the exposure was controlled, (ii) whether any monitoring of exposure was conducted, and (iii) the complexity of the exposure pathways. Controlled exposures occur, for example in medicine, resulting in relatively small uncertainties, while uncontrolled exposures in environmental releases and accidents result in relatively large uncertainties. Simple exposure pathways require simpler dose assessment models which result in smaller uncertainties, e.g., external dose for single instantaneous exposures that occur in diagnostic medicine. The converse is also true, i.e., complex exposure scenarios require more complex modeling and result in larger uncertainties, an example being environmental dose reconstructions for reactor releases and atmospheric nuclear testing. For these various reasons, uncertainty of estimated external doses is almost always smaller than uncertainty of estimated internal doses. A brief summary follows of dosimetric uncertainties found in estimating doses for the sources of radiation exposure discussed in the above sub-sections.

Atomic bomb survivors. The sources of dosimetric uncertainty for the Japanese atomic bomb survivors have been discussed extensively in chapter 13 of DS02 (*19*). Although some of the component uncertainties, such as those in the yields and heights of burst of the bombs, are shared by all survivors, the dominating uncertainties are individual uncertainties in location and shielding. The adjustments for uncertainty of atomic bomb dose estimates have been done with factors obtained by regression calibration using a single overall estimate of uncertainty. For many years, a correction based on 35% classical error was used (*139*) while more recently a correction based on 40% classical error and 20% Berkson error has been proposed (*140*).

Medical radiation sources. An illustration of uncertainties in medical imaging is provided by the extensive uncertainty analysis conducted for the European epidemiological study on pediatric CT (*141*). The authors note coefficients of variation of dose received ranging from 20 to 30% for the brain and 20 to 40% for active bone marrow (ABM) [also called red bone marrow (RBM)] in pediatric and adolescent patients undergoing head CT. At the present, there are few detailed uncertainty analyses reported for cohorts involving radiotherapy patients though assuming the availability of treatment records, uncertainty should be smaller than for diagnostic medicine.

Natural radiation sources. Estimates of radiation doses from radon isotopes and their decay products are problematic. For this reason epidemiological studies have not generally used doses, but rather estimates of exposure to the gas (indoor concentrations in Bq m^{-3}) or to the decay products ("Working Levels" in miners - see section on Occupational Exposures). The uncertainty in direct measurements of indoor dose rates from environmental γ rays with the directly ionizing component of cosmic rays appears to be around 5% (*142*). However, uncertainties in modeled doses, which are often required for epidemiology are larger (*142*). Except in the case of solar flares, doses to aircrew from cosmic rays can be predicted with reasonable accuracy, i.e., within $\pm$30% at a 95% confidence level (*80*). Dose rates from solar flares at high altitude and high latitude can be least a factor of 10 higher than normal (https://hps.org/publicinformation/ate/faqs/solarflare.html).

Nuclear worker studies. Many radiation workers over the decades were individually monitored for external exposure to ionizing radiation by personal dosemeters; evaluations have shown that the dosemeters were limited in their ability to respond accurately to all radiation energies to which workers are exposed or to radiation from all directions (*143*). Bias (B) and uncertainty (K) in reported exposures among study facilities and across time were found as result of differences in incident photon energy, exposure geometry, and dosemeter type (*144*). The bias factor accounts for the sum of systematic error while the uncertainty is best described as a range of values lognormally distributed. Bias factors in the International Nuclear Workers Study, as an example, ranged between 1.22–2.05, with K ranging between 1.65–4.08 (*87*).

Environmental releases and nuclear testing. Estimates of the uncertainty of calculated external plus internal doses from environmental releases including atmospheric nuclear testing are typically expressed as a geometric standard deviation (GSD) because the probability density functions describing the uncertainty range of possible dose either for a representative person or an identified person are approximately lognormal. These distributions reflect the combined random and non-shared errors. For example, GSDs for doses calculated for nonspecific individuals from ingestion of ^{131}I from Nevada Test Site (NTS) fallout typically ranged between 2.5 and 3.0 (*121*); GSDs for identified persons in other studies were similar with most GSD estimates below 3.5. To account for complex shared and unshared uncertainty sources, the 2DMC method was applied to dose estimation for Mayak releases (*145*) and for exposures to radioactive fallout in Kazakhstan (*146*). Note that GSDs of 2.5 or more, as noted for this category of exposure, represent significantly greater uncertainties than for the other radiation sources discussed above.

The dosimetry methods described above represent a range of approaches described by many investigators and

have been applied to many of the epidemiologic studies included in the current review. We recognize that decisions need to be made about the approaches used that consider what is possible to achieve based on the time involved, the costs, and the urgency of need. These points are considered for occupational studies by Steenland et al. (*147*) and in a recent NCRP report (*88*).

HISTORY AND KEY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES OF IONIZING RADIATION AND CANCER AND NONCANCER RISKS JAPANESE ATOMIC BOMB SURVIVORS

History, Development of the Cohort, Statistical Analysis Methods

After the atomic bombings of Hiroshima on 6th August and Nagasaki on 9th August 1945, it is estimated that before the end of 1945 as many as 140,000 people in Hiroshima (out of a civilian population of ~330,000) and as many as 80,000 in Nagasaki (out of a civilian population of ~280,000) died as a consequence of the bombings (*148*, *149*).

The most important early (and largely null) findings were reported from the large-scale clinical study of adverse pregnancy outcomes and malformations in ~75,000 children born to exposed and nonexposed parents in both cities (*150*, *151*). This study was initiated because of previous fruitfly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) data which suggested that radiation-associated genetic effects might be significant sequelae of the bombings (*152*). Anecdotal clinical observations on cataract (*153*) and small head size and mental retardation among in utero exposed survivors (*154*) in early studies led to setting up of clinical studies without a clearly defined population sampling base. Early clinical observations (by Drs Kikuchi; Yamawaki), and a survey conducted in the late 1940s that reported excess leukemia cases in proximally exposed survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (*155*) led to the establishment (in 1948) of the Leukemia Registry in the two cities.

Recommendations of an expert group in 1955 (the Francis committee) led to formulation of a "unified study program" of morbidity surveys, clinical studies, death certificate, autopsy studies, and establishment of a cohort with retrospective mortality follow-up from the October 1950 National Census of Japan and with continuing nationwide prospective follow-up subsequently. A total of ~284,000 survivors were identified, about 195,000 of them residing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the time of the census. All survivors within 2.5 km of the hypocenters in both cities, and an age/sex matched subset of survivors between 2.5 km and 10 km from the hypocenters in the two cities, as well as a subset of those not in city (>10 km from hypocenters) at the time of the bombings were selected and each matched to the group of inner proximal survivors (<2 km) on city, sex, and age (*156*); this sample, with minor modifications in later years, made up the LSS, which numbered 120,320 individuals (*149*). With the establishment of the population-based cancer registries in Hiroshima in 1957 and Nagasaki in 1958, ascertainment of cancer incidence cases became possible among the LSS members residing in the two cities. Also, beginning in 1958, the Adult Health Study (AHS) LSS subset of 24,358 Hiroshima/Nagasaki-resident survivors were invited for biennial clinical health examinations; details of selection criteria are given elsewhere (*156*). The LSS and AHS have been the basis of numerous analyses of cancer and non-cancer mortality and morbidity. An in utero exposed cohort of 3638 persons (born to mothers exposed to atomic bomb radiation during pregnancy and born after the bombings but before May 31, 1946) was identified from birth records and other records and has been followed up clinically and via mortality (*157*).

As noted in the dosimetry section, many of the survivors or their surrogates were interviewed during the 1940s–1950s (*158*) and individual dose estimates were constructed for about 92% of persons in the LSS cohort (*148*), beginning in the late 1950s with the T57D system (*20*), and in the mid-1960s the T65D/T65DR dosimetry (*21*). Several early analyses were based on grouped estimates of T57D dose, also using distance from the hypocenters, all using chi-squared tests (*159–162*). The earliest finding of excess solid cancer was for thyroid carcinoma, using a distance-based analysis (*163*). In the early 1970s and later Mantel-Haenszel contingency table and related analyses (e.g., based on binomial tests) began to appear using individual T65D/T65DR doses (*164–167*). Contemporary with the introduction of the DS86 dosimetry in the mid-1980s (*18*) improved methods of analysis (*168–170*) began to be employed, using Poisson regression (*171*). Many recent Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF) analyses adjust for classical dosimetric error using regression calibration methods (*134*); this correction results in ~5–15% increase in risk estimates compared with estimates not incorporating adjustment for classical dosimetric error (*139*). The current DS02/DS02R1 dosimetry, introduced in the mid-2000s, has been used to assess risk of major cancer and non-cancer mortality outcomes (*28–30*) as well as cancer incidence (*23*, *31–39*).

Cancer Risks

To date, there have been three major sets of analyses of the cancer incidence data, those of solid cancer and hemopoietic malignancies which were published in 1994, using DS86 (*172*, *173*); solid cancer published in 2007 using DS02 (*174*); and the current publications for solid cancer, in 2017 (and later) using DS02R1, and with successively longer periods of follow-up; we only describe the results of the most recent reports of incidence findings below. With increasing follow-up through 2009, many types of cancer have been associated with atomic bomb radiation in the LSS. Specifically for cancer incidence, there is radiation-associated excess risk of most types of leukemia (*175*) including acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), acute

myeloid leukemia (AML) and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML), also for chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) although based on only 12 cases, and excess incidence risk for all solid cancer including cancers of the lung, thyroid (for exposure in childhood), male and female breast, liver, uterine corpus (but not uterine cervix), colon, central nervous system (CNS), salivary gland, stomach, urinary tract and prostate cancers (*23*, *31–34*, *36–39*, *176–179*) (see Supplemental Table S1;[2] https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There are also excess mortality risks of leukemia, solid cancer, including cancers of the esophagus, stomach, liver, gallbladder, lung, male and female breast, ovary, bladder and renal pelvis/ureter (*28*, *176*) (see Supplemental Table S1). In general, there has been little evidence of radiation-associated excess mortality or incidence risks for any type of lymphoma or multiple myeloma (*28*, *175*) (see Supplemental Table S1). Over the decades, investigators have specifically examined cancer incidence and mortality of those exposed in utero and reported significantly increased risks of solid cancer incidence (both males and females) and mortality (female but not male) for this population (*157*, *180*).

Dose response curvature. There is well documented upward curvature in the dose response for leukemia, with strong indications of such curvature ($P = 0.01$) for AML and to a lesser extent ($P = 0.05$) for ALL (*175*). Although previous analyses of all solid cancer reported a linear dose-response relationship, the most recent data indicate upward curvature in the male all solid cancer incidence data, although not for females (*23*). Possible departure from a linear dose-response was also noted for esophageal cancer, with the apparent curvature in males but not females when the dose-response shape was allowed to vary by sex (*177*). A recent analysis of the LSS all solid cancer incidence and mortality data by Brenner et al. (*181*) using a common period of follow-up (1958–2009) demonstrated a borderline significant upward curvature in male mortality, as well as significant curvature for female mortality. Determining the effect of curvature in the dose response and its impact on low dose effects is sometimes assessed via a factor determining the effect of extrapolation of dose, the so-called low dose extrapolation factor (LDEF), which is one component of the dose and dose-rate effectiveness factor (DDREF) used by the ICRP (*182*). The paper of Brenner et al. (*181*) implied estimates of LDEF up to 13 for some ranges of dose; however, alternative analyses using slightly less current LSS mortality data (with follow-up over the period 1950–2003) suggested much lower estimates of LDEF (*183*) as did later analysis of current LSS mortality and incidence datasets (*184*).

Various other forms of departure from a linear dose response have been assumed for particular analyses, in particular linear-exponential, quadratic-exponential (*185*) or quartic-exponential (*186*) also linear-threshold or linear-quadratic-threshold (*187–189*), which have highlighted departures from linearity in some cases (*185*, *186*).

Effect modification by age, time since exposure and sex. For many solid cancers there are significant effects of age at exposure, attained age, sex, and time since exposure. The excess relative risk (ERR) for a given dose generally decreased with increasing age at exposure, attained age and male sex (*23*) except for the notably different patterns of increasing ERR with increasing age at exposure for lung cancer (*32*), and increased sensitivity to radiation exposure during puberty for breast (*31*) and uterine cancer (*36*). The most recent reports indicated differences in ERR of solid cancers for males and females, both for incidence and mortality (statistically significant for lung cancer only, see Supplemental Table S2; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Generally, ERR were higher for females compared to males (with the exception of colon cancer incidence) and for incidence compared to mortality. The radiation-associated ERR for colon cancer decreased with increasing time since exposure (*34*). For leukemia excluding CLL and adult T-cell leukemia (ATL) there are significant modifications of radiation risk with attained age and either time since exposure or age at exposure, ERR reducing significantly with increases in all three variables (*175*).

Non-Cancer Risks

After the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the higher-dose exposed survivors suffered from acute non-cancer effects, including hematological changes, bleeding, oropharyngeal lesions, burns, nausea, vomiting, fever and diarrhea in the first few days to weeks, and epilation and acute lethality (the latter due mainly to bone marrow destruction) in the first months after exposure (*190–192*). In utero high-dose radiation exposure also resulted in various non-cancer effects, such as microcephaly, mental retardation and growth retardation, depending on the developmental stage at the time of bombing (*193–195*). In the following subsections we discuss the main late occurring non-cancer effects.

Genetic Effects and Untoward Outcomes of Pregnancy

As noted above, the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) (which later became RERF) formed the first filial (F_1) cohort, subsequently extended to children of atomic bomb survivors born in 1946–1984, to study the heritable genetic effects of radiation. Studies have included cancer incidence, cause of death, and biochemical genetic studies. No compelling evidence of effects has been found to date [e.g., (*196*, *197*)]. A recent study that reexamined the risk of congenital malformations and perinatal death, using refined dose estimates and analytical methods, found some indication of a radiation-related increase in adverse pregnancy

[2] Editor's note. The online version of this article (DOI: https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1) contains supplementary information that is available to all authorized users.

outcomes (stillbirths, neonatal deaths, major malformations) but the risk estimates were imprecise and not statistically significant, and the authors noted that data were not available on the full range of possibly confounding factors that are known to affect pregnancy outcome (*198*).

Central Nervous System Exposed In Utero

Otake and Schull (*195*) documented radiation-associated small head size among those exposed in utero to the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with effects particularly pronounced for those exposed 0–7 weeks or 8–15 weeks post-ovulation. There are also radiation-associated reductions of intelligence quotient (IQ) and increase in severe mental retardation, particularly among those in utero survivors exposed 8–25 weeks post-ovulation (*199*). There are (non-significant) suggestions of upward curvature in the dose response for small head size, particularly during the second trimester (*199*), but somewhat stronger (but still non-significant) indications of upward curvature in all trimesters for severe mental retardation (*199*, *200*).

Circulatory System

Evidence for an increased radiation risk associated with overall and subtypes of cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality, particularly heart disease and stroke, emerged in the 1990s and has been seen in a number of recent analyses of the LSS mortality data (*29*, *201–203*), although less so in the AHS incidence data (*204*), perhaps reflecting the smaller number of cases [e.g., 1,546 incident ischemic heart disease (IHD) cases (*204*) vs. 3,556 IHD deaths (*29*)] and differently defined endpoints (see Supplemental Table S1; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), and possibly more accurate diagnosis in the morbidity data. More recently, other forms of CVD, including valvular heart disease (in particular rheumatic heart disease), hypertensive organ damage and heart failure have been associated with radiation exposure in the atomic bomb survivors (*29*) (see Supplemental Table S1).

Dose Response Curvature

There are few indications of departures from linearity for most CVD endpoints, with very weak ($P = 0.17$) indications of upward curvature for stroke (*203*). The analysis of aggregate CVD mortality data has estimated LDEF of ≤ 1 when restricted to weighted colon dose <3 Gy, but with considerable uncertainties (*183*, *184*).

Effect Modification by Age, Sex and Other Factors

Radiation-associated ERR for CVD mortality decreases with increasing age at exposure (*205*) and there are borderline significant decreasing trends with attained age (*203*, *205*); however, the ERR does not substantially vary by sex, or time since exposure (*203*, *205*). Analysis of a subset of the LSS cohort (*203*) that responded to a postal survey revealed that adjusting for smoking, alcohol intake, education, type of household occupation, body mass index, and diabetes made generally no more than modest ($<20\%$) change in radiation-associated ERR for all CVD, stroke or heart disease mortality.

Eye

A paper on clinically diagnosed cataract reported an increased incidence linked to radiation exposure, with significant excess radiation-associated risks of cortical and posterior subcapsular cataract (PSC), but not nuclear cataract (*206*). A subsequent publication reported an increased prevalence risk for cataract surgery (see Supplemental Table S1; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) and evidence of a significant dose threshold (*207*), but no evidence for upward curvature using a linear-quadratic model (*207*); as noted elsewhere there are methodological problems with the fitting of threshold models (*208*).

In addition to cataracts, radiation-associated incidence risks have also been reported in the AHS for various types of retinal degeneration (*209*) (see Supplemental Table S1; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Excess risks have also been seen for normal-tension glaucoma, although not for any other type of glaucoma (*210*) nor for macular degeneration (*211*) (see Supplemental Table S1). For all endpoints except normal-tension glaucoma, and early macular degeneration radiation risk estimates are based on quite small numbers of cases (<100). Dose-response curvature has not been assessed for ocular endpoints apart from cataract.

Other Organs/Tissues

There is significant ($P < 0.05$) radiation excess mortality risk from non-malignant respiratory diseases, but much weaker indications ($P > 0.05$) of excess risk for digestive diseases, and very little excess risk from any other type of non-cancer mortality (*28*) (see Supplemental Table S1; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There are radiation-related increased prevalence risks of non-malignant thyroid disease ($P < 0.0001$), chronic liver disease and cirrhosis ($P = 0.001$), uterine myoma ($P < 0.00001$) (*204*), and increased prevalence risks of chronic kidney disease ($P = 0.038$) (*212*) (see Supplemental Table S1). A report assessing radiation-related risks for neurodegenerative diseases, specifically dementia, did not find significant associations (*213*, *214*); the earlier of these two studies also noted that "also low is the rate for dementia since examination attendance is hampered for those with severe affliction. In fact, incidence estimates for highly debilitating diseases are expected to be lower in the AHS than in the general population" (*214*). However, this observation was not made for the later follow-up (*213*), so it is unclear how much weight should be attached to this.

Possible Selection Effects in the Atomic Bomb Survivors

The huge numbers of early casualties, between 30–40% of the population of the two cities (*148*, *149*) suggest a

potential selection bias in survivors. The atomic bomb survivors suffered from burns, epilation and other acute injuries caused by the radiation as well as heat and blast of the bombs, and these injuries, in addition to radiation, may have contributed to development of non-cancer diseases in later life. There is striking downward curvature in the non-cancer mortality dose response in the 1950–1967 follow-up period, contrasting with the absence of such curvature in the 1968–1997 follow-up, which suggests selection effects in the early follow-up period (*215*). Some further evidence of selection effects has been presented by Stewart and Kneale (*191*), who documented evidence of heterogeneity of radiation risk for various endpoints, in particular CVD mortality, among various acute injury groups. However, Stewart and Kneale (*191*) did not consider the effects of dose error. Analysis taking this into account found much reduced and generally not statistically significant associations for CVD (*190*). Other evidence of selection, in particular an inverse dose response for suicide has been presented (*216*), although later analysis of this data has not been confirmatory (*217*).

MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC EXPOSURES

Studies of diagnostic medical radiation exposures have contributed to our understanding of the cancer and non-cancer risks from fractionated, partial body exposure to low to moderate doses. The study populations have included a wide range of ages at exposure and provide complementary evidence to occupational studies. They have also been used to assess the transportability of risk coefficients from the LSS to non-Japanese populations. The strongest studies are based on organ-dose estimation from medical records because recall of diagnostic radiation exposures is poor. Confounding by indication related to the underlying condition needs to be evaluated carefully. Key studies include the early studies of abdominal X rays in pregnant women (*218*), TB patients monitored with fluoroscopy (*219*, *220*), spinal X rays in women with scoliosis (*221*, *222*) and most recently the studies of pediatric CT scans. Findings from these studies are summarized below according to the outcomes.

Cancer Risk

Studies of Early Life Exposure

The first studies to suggest a relationship between diagnostic X rays and cancer were of childhood cancers after in utero radiation exposures. The Oxford Survey of Childhood Cancers (OSCC) suggested this link as early as 1956 using a case-control study based on self-reported medical history by the mothers (*218*). The X rays in this study were primarily pelvimetry to examine the size of a woman's pelvis to assess whether she would be able to give birth vaginally or not; these were usually performed near the end of pregnancy. When the findings were replicated in a large U.S. case-cohort study based on medical records, rather than self-report, the potential risks began to be taken more seriously (*223*). A variety of concerns including discrepancies with findings from in utero exposure in the atomic bomb survivors have been carefully evaluated (*224*, *225*). The general (if not quite universal) consensus is now that these studies support a causal association of childhood cancer with in utero exposures as low as ~0.01 Gy (*224–226*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). A problem with all these studies is the lack of individual dosimetry, although assessments of risk have considered dates of X-ray exams, the number of diagnostic films taken during pregnancy (based on general practitioner or X-ray department records and patient self-report), and calendar period specific estimates of fetal dose per film (*225*, *227*).

The main arguments opposing a causal interpretation of the OSCC findings have been set out in an NCRP report (*228*), and include a lack of clear confirmation of the statistical association in cohort studies, although statistical power is limited, and the largest of these studies has been found to be unreliable (*224*). However, findings of the OSCC case-control study were replicated in the MacMahon (*223*) case-cohort study, in particular findings there of very similar relative risks (RR) for leukemia, CNS cancer and other cancer mortality (although only for leukemia is the RR statistically significant). NCRP (*228*) also mentioned the decreased risk of childhood leukemia and other childhood cancers in twin cohorts despite the increased rate of obstetric radiography experienced by twins. However, even for the largest cohort of Swedish twins (*229*) there is limited statistical power to detect the predicted increased risk of exposure to X rays (*224*) and Mole (*230*) has pointed out the similarity of RR of X-ray exposure for twins and singletons in the OSCC, which has also been found in twin case-control studies in Sweden (*229*) and Connecticut (*231*). NCRP (*228*) also pointed out the similarity of the RR estimates for almost all types of childhood cancers in the OSCC as being unusual. However, as above the RR are very similar between cancer types in the MacMahon (*223*) study and a similar pattern of RR estimates between cancer types was seen in the results of a meta-analysis of all childhood cancer case-control studies except the OSCC (*232*) so this finding is not confined to the OSCC.

Studies of Computed Tomography (CT)

After concerns in the early 2000s about unnecessarily high radiation doses being delivered to children undergoing CT scans (*233*), and the rapid increase in use, several large-scale studies were launched. The UK-NCI CT cohort of ~180,000 patients with at least one CT examination under age 22 years found a dose-response relationship with leukemia and myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS) in relation to cumulative RBM dose (but not for leukemia excluding MDS), and for brain tumors in relation to brain dose (*234*). Careful evaluation of potential confounding by indication and reverse causation suggested that the brain tumor risks

might be over-estimated, but there was minimal evidence of bias for leukemia (*235*). The multi-center EPI-CT study of ~950,000 children from 9 European countries, including an enlarged UK cohort, also reported a significant dose-response for brain cancers (*236*) and for hematological malignancies (*237*) based on refined dosimetry methods. There are significant excess risks for brain cancers (*236*), and for leukemia excluding CLL (*237*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There were also significant dose-response relationships for non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) and Hodgkin lymphoma (HL), both (as for leukemia) in relation to RBM dose (*237*). An Australian cohort of ~612,000 exposed children and 10.5 million unexposed children found significant risk for brain cancers (*238*). Mean brain doses in these studies were ~0.05 Gy (range 0–4.72) (*236*, *238*). RBM doses were lower with a mean of ~0.015 Gy (range 0–1.68) (*237*). Results of the EPI-CT analyses suggest that among 10,000 children who undergo a (head) CT, about 1–2 additional hematological malignancies and 1 additional brain cancer are caused by the radiation exposure in the decade after the CT (*236*, *237*). The dose-response relationships for brain cancers and leukemia are higher than, but statistically compatible with those from childhood exposure in the LSS; however the increase in ERR/Gy with increasing age at exposure for brain cancer in the EPI-CT study (*236*) [as in the earlier studies of Pearce et al. (*234*) and Berrington et al. (*235*)] is opposite to that seen in many other exposed populations (*8*). The increased risk of HL in EPI-CT with RBM dose was surprising as ionizing radiation exposure is not an established cause (*8*). Comparisons of findings for HL and NHL with previous studies are complicated by changing disease classification schemes. Further evaluation of potential confounding by indication is warranted for these outcomes in the study centers with data on underlying conditions. A simulation study closely modeled on the UK CT study suggested that reverse causation was unlikely to result in bias away from the null for brain cancer in relation to CT exposure (*239*). Other concerns have been raised by a number of researchers (*240–242*), some of them (e.g., in relation to reverse causation and confounding by indication) addressed above.

Other Studies of Diagnostic Exposure

Breast cancer. The Massachusetts TB cohort included 13,500 patients who were exposed 1925–1954 and followed up for mortality until the end of 2002 (*219*, *243*). The Canadian Fluoroscopy Cohort Study (CFCS) included 93,000 TB patients (with similar numbers of males and females of all ages) exposed in the period 1930–1969 and followed up for mortality since 1950 and cancer incidence since 1969. Although each single exposure was low dose (0.01–0.1 Gy) (*244*) there were patients with cumulative doses to some organs >1 Gy because of the large number of examinations. Increased risks of breast cancer were reported in both the original Massachusetts (*51*, *219*, *245*) and Canadian (*246*) fluoroscopy cohort studies (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), and the absolute risk (but not the relative risk) was compatible with the LSS (*244*). Radiation risks decreased with increasing age at exposure and there were indications of risk attenuation after 40 years since first exposure (*246*).

A U.S. cohort of 3,000 women with scoliosis who received multiple spine X rays also found an increased risk of breast cancer, following a mean cumulative breast dose of ~0.13 Gy (range 0-1.11) (*221*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Lung cancer. In contrast to the breast cancer findings, there was no evidence of an increased risk of lung cancer mortality in either the Massachusetts or CFCS fluoroscopy cohorts (*220*, *247*, *248*). Various factors have been evaluated to try and understand this including biases from the underlying disease (TB), misclassification of causes of death and confounding by smoking. As these potential biases may not fully explain the differences with the breast cancer risks or the LSS an alternative explanation is that fractionation has a differential effect on the breast compared to lung tissue. Interestingly there is also no excess lung cancer mortality risk in the scoliosis cohort, but numbers of deaths are very small and lung doses somewhat lower than to the breast, ~0.04 Gy (range 0–0.68) (*222*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Other cancers. Significant excess thyroid cancer risk was observed in pooled analysis of two population-based French case-control studies, with thyroid cancers derived from population registries and history of medical diagnostic procedures reconstructed via telephone-administered questionnaire (*249*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). A positive but non-significant risk of thyroid cancer in relation to diagnostic radiation exposure was also seen in the U.S. Radiologic Technologist cohort (USRT), based on questionnaire-assessed thyroid cancer diagnosis and medical diagnostic exposure (*250*) (see Supplemental Table S3).

There was no significant excess risk of brain/CNS cancer at ages 10–24 in relation to diagnostic medical exposures in a large multi-national case-control study (*251*) (see Supplemental Table S3; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Brain cancer diagnosis and details of medical diagnostic exposures were questionnaire derived (*251*).

Non-Cancer Risk

Recent analysis of the pooled Massachusetts and CFCS TB fluoroscopy cohorts indicated significant trends with dose for all CVD, IHD and hypertensive disease for those exposed under 0.5 Gy, with significant or borderline significant trends for these endpoints for those exposed under 0.3 Gy (*252*). The use of this cutoff was not entirely arbitary, as there is biological data suggesting a difference in response above and below 0.5 Gy (*253*). Unlike a previous analaysis of the CFCS data (*254*) there was no indication of a dose rate or fractionation effect (*252*). The fractionation

metric used in the CFCS data is slightly different from that employed in the pooled analysis, and the significance of the effect in the CFCS data disappeared if a lag period other than 10 years was employed (*254*).

MEDICAL THERAPEUTIC EXPOSURES

At the turn of the 20th century, the announcement of the discovery of X rays was very quickly followed by the understanding of their potential application in medical settings as treatment for both malignant and non-malignant conditions (*255*, *256*). The use of radiotherapy expanded dramatically throughout the 20th century, with substantial improvement in patient outcomes resulting from rapid advances in clinical practice, including the shift from orthovoltage to megavoltage X-ray therapy and the introduction of LINACs, use of fractionation, the introduction of particle therapy, and more advanced approaches to brachytherapy. Nearly immediately after the introduction of X-ray therapy, however, various adverse health effects were also identified, and a number of strategies were employed to try to minimize such effects (e.g., crude shielding approaches). Despite this early recognition of the adverse health effects of radiotherapy, the first large-scale studies of these adverse effects were not undertaken until the mid-1950s.

The various study designs utilized in the earliest studies of the adverse effects of radiotherapy, from relatively small single- or multi-institution cohorts with detailed patient and treatment data to large-scale population-based cancer registry data with very limited patient and treatment data, and nested case-control studies that attempted to leverage the strengths of both approaches, provided a robust framework for adverse effects studies that has flourished in the last half century and yielded numerous findings that have directly impacted clinical practice, and informed our understanding of the risks from high-dose fractionated, partial body radiation exposure. This section provides a history of key epidemiological studies of both cancer and non-cancer risks associated with therapeutic medical exposures.

Cancer Risk

Some of the earliest epidemiological studies of cancer risks following radiotherapy focused on patients who were treated for non-malignant conditions, most notably ankylosing spondylitis (*257–260*), tinea capitis in New York (*261–263*) and Israel (*264–267*), thymus gland enlargement (*268*, *269*), peptic ulcer disease (*270–272*), benign head and neck conditions (*273*), and benign gynecological diseases (*274–278*). Although use of radiotherapy for these types of benign conditions ha ss largely disappeared (in part due to reporting of the increased subsequent cancer risks), radiation is still used in the treatment of some patients with benign meningioma (*279*), vestibular schwannoma (*280*), some types of hemangioma (*281*) and various other non-malignant conditions (*282–286*). Also, a number of the earlier populations treated with radiation for benign disease continue to be followed, and have yielded interesting contrasts to the groups followed for cancer (*259*, *272*, *276–278*, *287–289*) (see Supplemental Table S4; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

The Late Effects Study Group (LESG) was formed in the late 1970s to investigate the subsequent occurrence of malignancies associated with childhood cancer treatment. Combining detailed patient data from multiple institutions enabled the assessment of both radiotherapy- and chemotherapy-related risks, often with detailed dose data. The efforts of this group led to some of the first systematic reports of cancer risks associated with radiotherapy (*290–292*). The LESG analyses also highlighted the importance of considering other factors such as chemotherapy and genetic susceptibility (*293*), which was supported by reports of second cancer risks following radiotherapy for retinoblastoma (*294*, *295*).

During a similar timeframe, the first large-scale cancer registry-based studies of second cancer risks after radiotherapy were conducted, for example, the study of 180,040 women from 15 cancer registries in 8 countries treated for cervical cancer (*296*), later expanded to a series of case-control studies nested within this cohort (*297–299*) (see Supplemental Table S4; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). These efforts demonstrated the critical role that cancer registries can play in surveillance of risks for developing subsequent malignancies in cancer survivors because of their large sample size, systematic ascertainment of cancer diagnoses and mortality, and long-term follow-up, which is particularly important since radiation-related malignancy risks often do not appear until at least five years following exposure and may persist for decades. A comprehensive monograph of second cancer risks using U.S. population-based cancer registry data was published in 2006 (*300*), and similar analyses of specific second cancers and/or specific patient populations using registry data from around the world are published regularly. While these studies provide valuable surveillance for second cancer risks, the lack of detailed treatment data limits their contribution for better understanding of radiation dose-response relationships and potential modifying factors, and thus limits their utility for modifying clinical practice. However, case-control studies within these cancer registry populations have provided valuable dose response information and important findings on interactions with co-factors such as smoking (*301*).

Because children, adolescents, and young adults treated for cancer potentially have many years of life in which to experience adverse effects of radiotherapy, and because of potential concern that young individuals may be particularly susceptible to radiation-related damage, researchers investigating cancer risks associated with therapeutic medical exposures have dedicated substantial efforts to focus on these patient populations. Particularly notable efforts that have informed cancer risks include a number of large-scale cohorts of patients with HL, testicular cancer, and childhood

cancers, many of which were initiated in the 1980s and 1990s and continue their follow-up today (*302–308*). Other susceptible populations, such as patients who are immunosuppressed as part of the clinical approach to hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, also have substantially increased risk of developing second cancers following total body irradiation (*309–311*).

Over time, the importance of more detailed, organ-specific exposure assessment was recognized, and radiation dose-response relationships for specific cancer types were quantified. This methodological advance was highly reliant on parallel advances in dosimetry for radiotherapy, which is reviewed in a separate section. In brief, while registry-based studies typically have relied on an indicator variable for receipt of radiotherapy, subsequent studies used prescribed dose to the tumor as a surrogate for dose to the organ at risk for a subsequent malignancy [e.g. (*312*)]. More detailed nested case-control studies with detailed patient and treatment data have collected radiotherapy records and subsequently used treatment doses and field configurations to estimate the dose to the location of the subsequent malignancy for cases and a corresponding location for matched controls [e.g. (*313*)]. While this approach greatly strengthened the etiological evidence, it cannot be used for the prediction of absolute risk. Currently available risk prediction models attempt to identify cancer survivors at high risk of subsequent malignancies based on radiotherapy (yes vs. no) [e.g. (*314*)] or on prescribed dose (*315*). Nevertheless, the models are useful to recommend screening for survivors or treatment alternatives for new patients. This illustrates that the quality of the radiotherapy record is a substantial contributor to the uncertainty in radiation dose estimates, particularly for patients with long follow-up and therefore treatment in the distant past for whom only paper records with field drawings have been available (*55*). The collection of radiation treatment planning simulation films for subsets of patients often reduced uncertainties, while current efforts to directly collect Digital Imaging and Communication (DICOM) data have substantial promise to reduce uncertainty, despite challenges in image and file standardization and storage. Uncertainty in dose estimates also can arise from uncertainty in tumor location and patient anatomy.

Despite these uncertainties, radiation dose-response modeling generally has demonstrated linear dose-response relationships through the full therapeutic dose range for all tumor types except for thyroid cancer, for which there is a downturn in risk at approximately 20 Gy, as described in several comprehensive reviews (*316–319*). Notably, the relative magnitudes of radiation-related cancer risks (per unit dose) after therapeutic exposures tend to be lower than those observed in groups such as the LSS and other groups exposed at much lower levels of dose (see Supplemental Tables S1, S3, S15, S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Several studies have evaluated whether second cancer risks may vary by the volume of tissue irradiated (*320*, *321*), but future research on this topic and other clinical parameters such as hypo- and hyper-fractionation is needed. Overall, findings from studies of cancer risks associated with radiotherapy have altered clinical practice, such as the reduced use of radiation, reduced field sizes, and/or reduced doses for many patient populations. They have also provided some of the first clear evidence of radiation-related cancer risks for organs such as the pancreas, and rectum.

Non-Cancer Risk

Cardiovascular disease (CVD). Studies of groups treated for cancer in the late 1950s and early 1960s were the first to identify possible CVD risks associated with high dose radiation (*322*, *323*), long before any excess risk was identified in the LSS. These early findings, and those in patients treated for HL (*324*) were instrumental in moves to limit heart dose for treatment of HL.

There have been two pooled analyses of CVD. The first of these is a pooling of patients treated for HL in 13 countries included in 9 randomized trials (*325*). Dose reconstruction was systematically applied across all trials and was independent of outcome. The second of these is a systematic review, combined with a pooled analysis of breast cancer clinical trials (*326*), but this is much less informative as a study of radiation dose response, since each woman was assigned the mean heart dose from the particular trial that she was in. This makes it in effect a species of ecological study, the potentials for bias in which are well known (*327*, *328*). Both studies are unusual among modern studies of CVD in that there is little or no adjustment for major lifestyle and medical risk factors; nevertheless, the risk estimates are within the range seen elsewhere (see Supplemental Table S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Childhood cancer survivor cohorts. The various analyses of the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study (CCSS), a largely US-based cohort of persons treated for cancer in childhood (*329–332*) generally do not exhibit significant increasing trend with dose, although many show significant excess risk, generally above 15 Gy (see Supplemental Table S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Strengths of the CCSS studies include the large size, efforts to validate self-report with medical records and adjustment for lifestyle/environmental factors in some of the studies (*329–332*), but limitations of the CCSS CVD studies include the lack of reporting of age at diagnosis of the CVD event for an appreciable fraction (11% of the cohort) (*329–331*), incomplete validation of self-reported outcomes, and lack of complete individualization of dose estimates (*55*). The French/French-UK studies (*333–337*) document significant excess mortality and incidence risks of IHD and cerebrovascular disease (CeVD) in childhood cancer survivors. Strengths of some of the French/French-UK studies included the source of diagnosis [e.g., national mortality registries (in France and UK) although for some of the studies endpoint information was via patient contact and medical record validation (*335–337*)] and fully individualized dose estimates (*56*, *338*). The St Jude

Lifetime cohort had the most complete adjustment for lifestyle/environmental/medical risk factors (*339*).

Hodgkin lymphoma (HL) cohorts. The three Dutch case-control studies (*340–342*) assessed incidence from various types of CVD in a group of survivors of HL, and in each case documented excess risk (see Supplemental Table S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Incidence was assessed via a postal questionnaire completed by the patients' general practitioner and/or cardiologist. There were some indications of upward curvature in the dose-response for some endpoints [e.g., valvular heart disease (*340*), heart failure (*342*)].

Adult cancer survivor cohorts. The Nordic case-control study of Darby et al. (*343*) assessed IHD incidence in a group of women treated for breast cancer, as did similar studies in the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Sweden (*344–350*). A major strength of the Nordic study is that national incidence registries in Sweden and Denmark were used to assess incidence of IHD. Dosimetry reconstruction in all these studies was based on individual radiotherapy charts. Another strength of many of these studies is the rich covariate lifestyle and medical information, in particular the standard risk factors for CVD that are available and used for the analysis (see Supplemental Table S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). However, the Swedish and German studies lacked any lifestyle/medical risk factor data (*349*, *350*) (see Supplemental Table S5).

There were a number of small studies of CVD after radiotherapy for various other types of cancer (*351–373*) most of which demonstrated significant increases in various types of CVD with increasing dose.

Cohorts exposed for treatment of non-malignant disease. The U.S. study of patients treated for peptic ulcer, who were given mostly a single treatment course of X rays to the stomach, documented significant excess mortality risks for all CVD and IHD, and indications of excess risk for CeVD (*374*). There were no significant ($P > 0.2$) differences between ERRs by endpoint (IHD, CeVD, other CVD), and few indications of curvature in dose response (*374*). Using thyroid dose (a surrogate for carotid artery dose) for CeVD and heart dose for other CVD endpoints resulted in significant heterogeneity of risk ($P = 0.011$) between endpoints, which was not the case when heart dose was used throughout ($P = 0.28$) (*374*). A study of Israel tinea capitis patients found large and significant excess risks of IHD and modest (but still significant) elevated risks of CeVD and carotid stenosis (a subset of CeVD) (*375*). A much larger risk for carotid stenosis was obtained using (the more physiologically relevant, because anatomically closer) thyroid dose rather than breast dose (*375*). A cohort of persons receiving X rays in infancy in Rochester for treatment of an enlarged thymus did not show excess incidence of CVD (*376*). There were borderline significant indications of curvature in the dose response ($P = 0.11$), which appeared to increase and then turn over at higher levels of dose (*376*).

Non-cancer effects on the eye. Ocular diseases observed after therapeutic exposure include cataracts, neovascular glaucoma, retinopathy, papillopathy, maculopathy and optic neuropathy (*377*). These diseases, save cataracts, are induced by relatively high dose. There are many case reports and clinical studies that have relatively short follow up, but some studies provide risk estimates, e.g., after brachytherapy or external radiotherapy for childhood cancer (*378*), ^{131}I treatment for thyroid cancer (*379*), ocular tumors (e.g., uveal melanoma) (*380*, *381*), CNS irradiation for leukemia (*382*), and total-body irradiation preceding bone marrow or hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (*383–386*). However, very few studies evaluate radiation doses to the eye or eye lens; of the few that do (*378*, *387–389*) there are only two studies yielding trend risk estimates (both significant), both studies of cataract (*378*, *388*) (see Supplemental Table S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Effects in offspring of cancer survivors. There have been a number of studies of reproductive outcome in childhood cancer survivors. Although offspring of women treated for cancer in childhood and receiving uterine doses >5 Gy were more likely to be small for gestational age, there was no change in proportions of stillbirths or miscarriages in relation to either father's or mother's radiation treatment, nor was there variation in the proportion of offspring with simple malformation, cytogenetic defects or single-gene defects (*390*). There was no variation in rate of congenital abnormalities in offspring of male or female childhood cancer survivors with dose (to ovaries or testes) (*391*).

CHORNOBYL ACCIDENT

The explosion at reactor 4 of the Chornobyl nuclear power plant (NPP) in Ukraine on 26th April 1986 resulted in the most serious of any accidental radioactive releases, with releases of $\sim 1.2–1.8 \times 10^{18}$ Bq of short-lived ^{131}I and $\sim 1.4 \times 10^{17}$ Bq of much longer lived ^{134}Cs and ^{137}Cs (*392*, *393*). Ukraine and Belarus were the most highly contaminated areas, but other parts of the former USSR were also contaminated, and to a much lesser extent many parts of Western Europe (*392*, *393*).

Cancer Risk

Leukemia and Other Hemopoietic Malignancies

Exposure in childhood. Studies comparing incidence of leukemia in children before and after the Chornobyl accident in countries outside the former Soviet Union that were closer to and far away from the accident failed to show any increase due to estimated radiation exposure (*394–397*). A collaborative international case-control study of childhood leukemia in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia included all persons exposed either in utero or under age 6 in the three republics and diagnosed in the period 26 April 1986 to 31 December

2000 (*398*). The central estimates of risk were large, and largely driven by the large and significant risks in Ukraine (but the CI for the risk estimates for the three countries overlapped) (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), although not inconsistent with those of other groups exposed in childhood (see Supplemental Tables S1, S3, S15, S17). Of the 421 cases, 311 were ALL, with 86 AML and 24 acute unclassified leukemias (*398*). However, the authors note "the large and statistically significant dose-response might be accounted for, at least in part, by an overestimate of risk in Ukraine. Therefore, we conclude this study provides no convincing evidence of an increased risk of childhood leukemia as a result of exposure to Chernobyl radiation, since it is unclear whether the results are due to a true radiation-related excess, a sampling-derived bias in Ukraine, or some combination thereof" (*398*). Significantly increased radiation risks of ALL among all participants and all leukemia among males whose estimated radiation exposure to the bone marrow was higher than 10 mSv were reported in a separate analysis of Ukrainian data alone which included a slightly different number of cases (*399*). Although uncertainties in dose were estimated in one of these studies (*398*), it is not clear if these were used in the analysis. A later case-control study of acute leukemia among children 0–5 years of age at the time of the accident in the most contaminated areas of Ukraine found a significant dose-response, but with a slope that was substantially lower than that for Ukraine reported earlier by the international collaboration (*400*).

There have been a number of ecological analyses of various types of cancer among persons exposed in childhood [e.g. (*395*, *401*)] and in adulthood (*402*). As these are much less informative than studies with individual exposures, we shall not discuss them further.

Exposure in adulthood. A case-control study of cleanup workers from Belarus, Russia and the Baltic states yielded borderline significant ERR for incident NHL and hematological malignancies excluding multiple myeloma; risks were also adjusted for dose error, but this did not much change the central estimate, although CI were somewhat expanded (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*403*). A case-control study in Ukraine (with dose error adjusted using regression calibration) suggested that there were significant ERR for leukemia excluding CLL and also for CLL (*404*) (see Supplemental Table S6). In neither study was there significant curvature in dose response, for any endpoint (*403*, *404*). A study of CLL cases in Ukrainian cleanup workers reported that survival after CLL (adjusted for dose) was significantly shorter for those exposed at young age (*405*), also that tumor telomere length in radiation exposed CLL cases was significantly longer than for non-radiation-exposed CLL (*406*). It should be noted that neither NHL nor CLL are thought to be strongly radiogenic (*8*, *226*). It is also not clear what significance should be attached to telomere length changes, since both lengthening and shortening of telomere lengths have been seen following radiation exposure (*407*, *408*).

Thyroid Cancer

In utero exposure. There was a significant increase in large (>10 mm) benign thyroid nodules, and a large but non-significant excess of thyroid cancer cases, but based on only 8 cases (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*409*). There does not appear to be any excess of small (<10 mm) benign thyroid nodules (see Supplemental Table S6). There was significant downward curvature for all types of nodules, all benign nodules and small benign nodules (*409*). Risk was not adjusted for dose error.

Exposure in childhood. Two large cohort studies in Ukraine and Belarus with 25,000 participants exposed to the Chornobyl fallout before age 18 years were initiated ten years after the accident (*410*). In Ukraine, significant increasing trends for prevalent (*411*) and incident thyroid cancer (*412*), with borderline significant indications ($P = 0.101$–0.112) of downward curvature in the dose response have been observed (*413*). In Belarus, there is a significant dose response for thyroid cancer prevalence, with borderline significant ($P = 0.057$-0.078) downward curvature in the prevalence odds ratio (OR) dose response (*414*). Interestingly, very little difference is made by various types of adjustment for dose error in either dataset (*413*, *414*).

Histopathological and molecular characteristics of thyroid cancer. Several studies of post-Chornobyl papillary thyroid cancer (PTC) after childhood exposure to ^{131}I have reported a high frequency of solid variant PTC, *RET-PTC* rearrangements, and/or aggressive tumor behavior associated with radiation dose (*415–418*). The most comprehensive study of PTC to date analyzed genomic, transcriptomic, and epigenomic profiles of 359 cases from Ukraine with individual estimates of ^{131}I dose received ≤18 years (mean = 0.25 Gy) (*419*). In multivariate analyses adjusted for age and sex, investigators found a linear dose-dependent enrichment of fusion drivers (including *RET* and other genes from the mitogen-activated protein kinase pathway) and increases in small deletions and simple structural variants that were clonal and bore hallmarks of non-homologous end-joining repair. Radiation-related genomic alterations were more pronounced among individuals younger at exposure. These findings indicate that ionizing radiation-induced DNA double-strand breaks represent an early event in thyroid carcinogenesis after ^{131}I exposure and provide a mechanistic support to epidemiological observations (*419*).

Cleanup workers' studies. There is a large and highly significant dose response for thyroid cancer incidence in relation to radiation doses from cleanup work and residential exposures in a case-control study within the Belarus, Russian and Baltic states cleanup worker (liquidator) cohort (*420*) (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Adjustment for dose error made little difference to the trend, although CI were markedly

wider (*420*). Although without adjustment for dose error the excess odds ratio (EOR)/Gy in the Ukraine cleanup workers is much lower than for the Belarus/Russia/Baltic study (*421*), there is a remarkable increase (by about 50%) in risk when Monte Carlo maximum likelihood (MCML) methods are used to adjust for dose error, and for follicular tumors the trend becomes borderline significant ($P = 0.066$) (*422*). Although thyroid cancer radiation risk after adult exposure is rather lower than in childhood, there is nevertheless accumulating evidence that it may be non-zero (*423*).

Breast Cancer

Several studies reported increased breast cancer incidence in contaminated areas of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia after the Chornobyl accident (*424–426*); as all are ecological studies, bias is a major concern. To date, only one study has been conducted which evaluated the risk of female breast cancer in relation to individually estimated doses from the Chornobyl accident (*427*). This case-control study in Bryansk Oblast, Russia during 2008–2013 reported non-significantly increased excess risk (*427*) (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). The point estimate was substantially larger than those recently observed in the LSS (*31*) and in other exposed groups (*428*). There was much higher radiation-related risk for women exposed before age 13 years and those who were younger at the time of diagnosis (*427*). Risk was not adjusted for dose error (*427*).

Recently, several studies compared breast cancer rates among pregnant or lactating women with the general population rates (*425*, *429*, *430*). Generally, the standardized incidence ratios (SIR) were not significantly increased for women pregnant at the time of the accident but were elevated for women lactating at the time of accident. The SIRs were highest in women who were exposed at a younger age and during the earliest period subsequent to the accident (*430*). However, none of these studies had individual dose estimates, so the results should be interpreted cautiously and the findings need to be followed up with studies employing individual dose estimates.

Non-Cancer Risk

Benign thyroid disease. Prevalence of follicular adenoma, a benign thyroid neoplasm, was significantly associated with ^{131}I dose in Ukraine (*431*, *432*) and Belarus (*433*) pediatrically exposed cohorts and EOR/Gy decreased with increasing age at exposure (*432*, *433*). The ^{131}I risk of non-neoplastic thyroid nodules as a group was also significantly elevated in Belarus (*434*). Above 5 Gy there was evidence of turnover in dose response, with some dependence of EOR/Gy on nodule size and age at exposure (*434*). A qualitatively similar pattern of ^{131}I risk by size of non-neoplastic nodules, with risk much higher for large nodules than for small nodules, was found in the Ukraine cohort exposed in utero (*409*). A thyroid screening study of individuals exposed to ^{131}I at age $\leq$10 years in the Russian Federation found little evidence of dose response for solid thyroid nodules, cysts or goiter (*435*).

Of functional thyroid diseases, significant associations with ^{131}I dose were observed for prevalence of hypothyroidism [thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) >4 mIU/L] in both childhood cohorts in Ukraine and Belarus, with significant upward curvature in dose response in Belarus (*436*, *437*). In both cohorts, the ^{131}I risk of hypothyroidism was higher among individuals with autoantibodies to thyroid peroxidase (ATPO) negative rather than ATPO positive individuals. In Belarus, it also decreased with increasing age at exposure, presence of diffuse goiter, and urban residence (*437*). There was no evidence of dose response for ATPO-positive hypothyroidism, autoimmune thyroiditis, and hyperthyroidism in either cohort (*436–439*). An association with ^{131}I dose for ATPO positivity was found in Ukraine (*438*), but the results in Belarus were null (*437*).

Cataract

Cataract was studied in a cohort of 8,607 clean-up workers in Ukraine 12–14 years after the accident; they were drawn from several groups of workers active on-site during 1986–1987 (*440*, *441*). For this cohort, γ doses ascertained from the official "recorded" doses were corrected and β particle doses added, and dose uncertainty was assessed (although not used in the analysis) (*441*). PSC or cortical cataracts were present in 25% of the subjects. A significant radiation dose response was found for stage 1 cataracts (considered as cataract onset) and for PSC (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There was little evidence of curvature in the dose response; although there was some evidence for threshold in dose, given the absence of dose response curvature, and as discussed in the LSS section, the evidence of threshold is therefore maybe artefactual (*208*).

Cardiovascular Disease

There are significant excess CVD risks (and risks of various CVD subtypes) in the Russian cleanup workers (*442–447*) (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). A remarkable feature of the Russian cohort is the relatively high rate of CVD incidence, including for example 23,264 cases of CeVD in a cohort of 53,772 people (*444*), contrasting with 15,025 deaths in a cohort of 91,013 (*447*); in interpreting these one should bear in mind the substantially elevated CVD mortality rates in the Russian population relative to those in other developed countries (*448*). There remain concerns about many design aspects of the Russian study, which also lacks any information about major lifestyle and medical CVD risk factors (*449*). Nevertheless, the ERR/Gy are not substantially greater than those seen in some other groups (see Supplemental Tables S1, S3, S5; https://doi.org/10.1667/

RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There are some indications of excess risk in some populations of Ukraine cleanup workers (*450*), although not in all (*451*) (see Supplemental Table S6).

Transgenerational Effects

To investigate germline de novo mutations (DNMs) of parental radiation exposure, a parent-offspring trio study analyzed 130 children born in 1987–2002 to parents employed as cleanup workers or exposed to occupational and environmental ionizing radiation after the accident (*110*, *452*). Although dose uncertainties were estimated, no use was made of them in the analysis (*110*, *452*). Whole-genome sequencing of 130 children and their parents did not reveal paternal or maternal pre-conceptional dose-related increases in the rates, distributions, or types of DNMs, nor in leukocyte relative telomere length, although there were significant modifying effects of age (*453*) (see Supplemental Table S6; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Over this exposure range (paternal preconception dose 0–4.08 Gy, maternal preconception dose 0–0.55 Gy), evidence is lacking for a substantial effect on germline DNMs in humans, suggesting minimal impact from transgenerational genetic effects (*453*). The genetic doubling dose (=1/ERR/Gy) implied by this study (*453*) (see Supplemental Table S6) greatly exceeds, and is statistically incompatible with, the value of 1 Gy that is often assumed, largely based on 7-locus mouse data (*454*); indeed the entries given in Supplemental Table S6 imply a lower 95% CI of paternal and maternal gonadal doubling dose of 1/0.0221/Gy ∼45.2 Gy and 1/0.0910/Gy ∼11.0 Gy respectively.

Psychological Effects

Neuropsychological and psychological impairments associated with radiation exposure from Chornobyl have been reported for those exposed as children, in particular poor self-rated health as well as clinical and subclinical depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (*455*). The excess morbidity rate of psychiatric disorders among cleanup workers in the first year after a disaster was reported at 20% (*455*), and the rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder remained elevated decades later; elevated rates of suicide in a small Estonian cohort of cleanup workers (without dose estimates) are a possible marker of this (*456*). Many of the lingering effects were due to continuing worries about the adverse health effects of radiation exposures and to paucity of mental health care in affected regions (*455*). Future research is needed to clarify the dose-dependent incidence and prevalence of mental disorders for individual mental health effects.

OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES

Workers in NPP, nuclear reprocessing plants, nuclear weapons production plants, nuclear shipyard workers and various other groups that are exposed to radiation occupationally, for example medical radiation workers, aircrew and astronauts, and uranium miners, are predominantly exposed to radiation at low dose rates (<5 mGy/h) (*457*), although sometimes to considerable cumulative dose, over 1 Gy. As such these groups are important in providing information on risks at low dose rate exposures. At least for cancer, the radiobiological understanding suggests that the slope of the dose response for such low dose rate exposure should coincide with that theoretically expected from low-dose exposure (*458*). We consider the various types of radiation workers in turn.

Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) and Nuclear Reprocessing Plant Workers

We consider first a large study of NPP and reprocessing workers, the International Nuclear Workers Study (INWORKS). We also describe a number of other, generally smaller (but in some cases also statistically powerful) NPP worker studies, including the Mayak workers and separate studies to be included in the Million Person Study (MPS).

INWORKS

INWORKS is a collaborative study of health effects observed in a pooled study of French, UK, and U.S. radiation workers coordinated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) (*87*, *459–466*). INWORKS builds upon IARC's previous investigations, which included the 3-Country Study (*467*, *468*) completed in the mid-1990s (using the Canadian, UK and U.S. workers) and the 15-Country Study completed in the mid-2000s (*469–473*); although the INWORKS cohort is somewhat smaller than the 15-Country Study (309,932 vs. 407,391), it has more person years of follow-up (10.72 vs. 5.19 million).

INWORKS comprises French, UK, and U.S. workers who were monitored for external radiation and employed for at least one year at an included nuclear facility. However, whereas the UK and French components of INWORKS are essentially national studies, with many different types of radiation workers (in reactors, reprocessing plants, dockyards etc.), the U.S. component includes only five sites (Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Idaho National Laboratory, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard), but these also include a diverse variety of types of worker (including shipyard workers), in some cases with asbestos exposure, and it is the second largest group of workers (after the UK) in INWORKS. Several recent country-specific analyses of subsets of the INWORKS cohort have been published separately (*474–479*). Participating facilities/companies in INWORKS were selected based on records availability, quality, completeness, and shared exposure characteristics. In general, workers in INWORKS were predominantly exposed to low-level penetrating γ radiation from external sources; internal doses from intakes of radionuclides and neutron doses were not computed and some other occupational radiation exposures were not completely accounted for; 13% were flagged for

possible neutron exposure and 16% were flagged for incorporated radionuclides or internal monitoring (*466*). The most recent analyses include 309,932 workers and 103,553 deaths (28,089 from solid cancers) observed between 1944–2016 (10.72 million person-years) (*466*). Recorded doses have been adjusted to estimate organ/tissue absorbed dose, as well as personal dose equivalent [*Hp*(*10*)], accounting for differences in exposure scenarios, dosimetry, and recording practices over the study period (*87*). The average absorbed dose to the colon was 0.018 Gy. The cohort is predominantly male (87%) (*466*).

Cancer risk. The radiation dose-solid cancer mortality association was reasonably described by a linear model (see Supplemental Table S7; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) using a 10-year lag, although some downward curvature was apparent. There was little evidence of significant heterogeneity by country. Excluding deaths from lung cancer did not appreciably change the risk estimate, providing some evidence against strong confounding by smoking, with the dose-response for all solid cancers excluding lung cancer showing little evidence of downward curvature. Restricting workers to those hired in 1958 or later (ERR/Gy = 1.22; 90% CI: 0.74, 1.72) and 1965 or later (ERR/Gy = 1.44; 90% CI: 0.65, 2.32) markedly increased estimates, which contrasts notably with the estimate for those hired before 1958 (ERR/Gy = 0.20; 90% CI: –0.07, 0.49). The reasons for differences in risk by hire date are not readily elucidated in the current study but may be due in part, to limitations in dosimetry, especially in the early years of the nuclear industry. However, this may also illustrate the dangers of subset analysis, although 1958 and 1965 were selected *a priori* as years in which improvements in dosimetry occurred at the facilities. This pattern of risks by hire date was seen even more strongly in the U.S. worker component of INWORKS (*466*, *479*, *480*). A difference in estimates was also observed for whether workers were flagged (ERR/Gy = 0.21; 90% CI: –0.11, 0.56) or not flagged (ERR/Gy = 0.82; 90% CI: 0.46, 1.22) for intakes of radionuclides, a pattern of risks also found in the UK component of INWORKS (*476*). Sensitivity analysis in which the workers (13% of the total) that were flagged for possible neutron exposure were excluded suggested no change in trend ERR/Gy (0.53 vs. 0.53) (*466*). A concerted effort to better understand these differences in mortality patterns between earlier- and later-employed workers is needed.

Previous INWORKS studies have examined mortality from site-specific solid cancers and lymphohematopoietic cancers (*459*, *464*). For solid cancers, linear ERR/Gy (lagged 10 years) were statistically significant for cancers of the rectum, peritoneum, larynx, skin, and testis. In interpreting these results it must be pointed out that 24 cancer sites were evaluated (*464*), so it is possible that some of these sites (e.g., rectum, testis) which are not generally thought to be strongly radiogenic (*8*, *481*), may have arisen by chance. For lymphohematopoietic cancers, there was strong evidence of a dose-response association for leukemia, excluding CLL, but not for myeloma or lymphomas (see Supplemental Table S7; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There was no evidence of curvature in the dose-response. CML was the main contributor to all leukemia risk and there was no evidence of an association between radiation and CLL.

Non-cancer risk. Patterns of non-malignant disease mortality (46,029 deaths) were examined in the cohort followed through 2005, with an average equivalent dose of 0.025 Sv (*482*). The study found a positive association between radiation dose and all non-malignant causes of death that was best described by a linear model (see Supplemental Table S7; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). This association appeared driven by excess mortality from CVD. There was significant heterogeneity in circulatory disease risk by employer/facility (P = 0.01). There was no evidence of effect modification of CVD risk by age, employment duration, SES (derived from job titles), or time since exposure. Within CVD, positive dose-response associations were evident for mortality from CeVD and IHD (see Supplemental Table S7). An important limitation of INWORKS and most occupational studies is the absence of information on major risk factors for circulatory diseases, such as smoking, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, diet and exercise.

Mayak Workers

The Mayak nuclear plant is sited in Ozyorsk in the Southern Urals of Russia and is where the former USSR initiated nuclear operations on atomic bomb production in 1948. Five reactors were built to produce plutonium, with reprocessing to produce weapons grade material occurring onsite. Nuclear waste from the plant was initially discharged to the Techa River and in consequence many groups living downstream along the Techa River received substantial exposures (>0.5 Gy) (*105*, *483*). Most recent analyses are based on Mayak workers first employed in the period 1948-1982, with follow-up for mortality and (for those remaining within Ozyorsk) for morbidity to 2018 (*484–489*).

Although the Mayak cohort is of only moderate size (with just greater than 22,000 workers), it has a number of valuable features. The Mayak worker data are unusual in that the cohort received substantial internal (^{239}Pu) in addition to external γ (and neutron) doses, and the effects of these on various health endpoints are significant and independent. Although not unique in that respect, for example there are some workers at Sellafield with substantial ^{239}Pu dose (*490*), the internal doses in the Mayak cohort are at a much higher level than in other workforces. For comparability with other groups, we present here risks in relation to external γ dose. Unlike most worker datasets there is rich lifestyle data, adjusted for in many analyses (*484–489*).

Cancer risk. There is significant excess incidence of AML in relation to external RBM dose, but for no other type of hematolymphoid malignancy (*491*) (see Supplemental Table S8; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

AML risk is highest 2–5 years after exposure, decreasing substantially thereafter (*491*). There is little evidence of risk associated with ^{239}Pu for any hematolymphoid malignancy endpoint, and smoking adjustment makes little difference (*491*). In relation to external dose there is significant excess mortality and incidence risk of lung cancer (*492*), but not of bone or liver cancer (*493*). A significant excess mortality risk of solid cancers excluding lung, liver and bone in relation to external dose has been found (*494*), in particular for cancer of the esophagus, and a borderline significant (P = 0.06) excess risk of incidence of solid cancers excluding lung, liver and bone cancers (*495*) (see Supplemental Table S8). In terms of the dose from intakes of plutonium, highly significant excess risks of lung cancer mortality and incidence have been found (*492*), and significant excess risks of mortality from liver and bone cancers (*493*).

Non-cancer risk. Analyses in relation to external doses show significant excess risks of certain major subtypes of CVD incidence (*484–489*) (but not in general of mortality for these subtypes), and all CVD mortality (*496*) (see Supplemental Table S8; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). For many endpoints there were independent incidence risks in relation to internal α particle dose to the liver (*484–486*, *488*). There is significant excess risk of Parkinson's disease incidence (*497*), but little evidence (only in subset analysis) of excess incidence of chronic bronchitis (*498*) (see Supplemental Table S8). There are significant excess risks of all three main types of cataract, PSC, cortical and nuclear (*499*), but no excess risk of cataract surgery (*500*) (see Supplemental Table S8). There is also borderline significant excess risk of normal-tension glaucoma, based on a small number (*92*) of cases, but no significant risk of any other type of glaucoma (*501*) (see Supplemental Table S8). The Mayak CVD data, and in particular the differences between the mortality and incidence data, has been subject of a number of illuminating reviews (*449*, *502*, *503*).

Million Person Study (MPS)

The MPS proposes to examine the relationship between low-dose radiation exposure and mortality in 34 individual cohorts of U.S. workers (*504*, *505*). To date, health effects have been investigated in over a third of these cohorts, including studies of NPP workers (*248*, *506–508*), medical workers (*248*, *509*), industrial radiographers (*248*, *507*, *508*), U.S. atomic veterans (*248*, *507*, *510*, *511*), and nuclear weapons research and production workers (*248*, *507*, *512–517*). Three reports provide pooled information across several MPS cohorts to estimate excess risks from radiation (*248*, *507*, *508*), which we discuss below. Like many other older groups of nuclear workers, such as INWORKS (*466*), although in contrast to the Mayak workers (*484–489*), nested case-control studies within some other worker cohorts (*518*, *519*), and more recently assembled groups of medical workers (*520–522*), there is no information on major lifestyle and medical risk factors, in particular cigarette smoking, although lifestyle information is likely to be available for a sample of participants (*523*).

Cancer risk. An NCRP report presented pooled information on NPP workers, industrial radiographers and medical workers, comprising 367,722 persons, and with additional analysis including the Los Alamos workers (*512*), yielding no significant excess lung cancer risk (see Supplemental Table S9; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*524*). A pooled analysis of NPP workers and industrial radiographers, comprising 253,632 workers, provided little evidence of excess mesothelioma risk associated with radiation (*508*) (see Supplemental Table S9). As reported in a recent summary paper (*523*), five of the eight component studies describe an increased leukemia trend risk, namely NPP (*506*), industrial radiographers (*10*), medical radiation (*509*), Mound (*10*) and Rocketdyne (*10*), but three of these have yet to be published separately, appearing only in the summary publication and an earlier NCRP report (*10*); none are statistically significant (see Supplemental Table S9).

Non-cancer risk. As summarized in a recent review, there is no excess risk of IHD in any of the MPS studies, and for 6 out of 7 cohorts the central estimates of ERR are negative (*525*), although a recently updated analysis of one of these 7 (the Mallinckrodt workers) has yielded a significant trend for IHD (*517*). There is a significant trend of elevated Parkinson's disease mortality in a meta-analysis of industrial radiographers, NPP workers, U.S. atomic veterans, and nuclear weapons workers, comprising 517,608 persons (*507*) (see Supplemental Table S9; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Uranium Workers and Miners

Uranium and Other Hard-Rock Miners

Agricola (*526*) documented high rates of lung disease among metal miners in the Schneeburg and Joachimsthal areas, on either side of the Erz mountains. Harting and Hesse (*527*) were the first to identify that the "miner's disease" was a malignancy, later shown to be primary lung cancer. Later case series showed 150 deaths in a workforce of $\sim$650 men; histopathological review of subsequent case series established that the malignancy prevalent among miners in the Erz mountains was primary lung cancer (*528*, *529*). In the first decades of the 20th century radon was found in mines in both districts and was suspected as a cause of the lung cancer, a hypothesis confirmed in epidemiological studies of radon-exposed underground miners that were started in the 1950s and later. There are now more than 20 studies of lung cancer in radon-exposed miners, all of whom were male (*93*, *530*, *531*). Some of these had quantitative data on exposure that were analyzed by Lubin et al. (*532*) and by the U.S. Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiations (BEIR) IV (*533*) and BEIR VI (*95*) committees to develop risk models.

Risks have been estimated in terms of exposure to radon progeny expressed as Working Level Months (WLM), the product of time exposed in terms of 170-hour months and concentration expressed as Working Levels (WL) where 1 WL is defined as that concentration of short-lived radon decay products in equilibrium with activity 3700 Bq m^{-3} (100 pCi/L).

Cancer Risk

Lung cancer. The BEIR VI committee (*95*) assessed lung cancer risk in 11 miner cohorts, of which 8 were uranium miners. The pooled data included nearly 1.2 million person-years of follow-up, with 2,674 lung cancer deaths among workers with prior radon exposure, and 113 lung cancer deaths among workers without prior radon exposure (*95*). The large number of deaths permitted detailed examination of many factors that may modify the risk of radon-induced lung cancer. The ERR/WLM decreased with increasing time since exposure and attained age, and with increasing average radon concentration (the exposure-age-concentration model) or with decreasing duration of exposure (the exposure–age–duration model) (*95*). There was no variation in the ERR/WLM with age at first exposure (*95*). More recently, the Pooled Uranium Miner Analysis (PUMA) brought together the data from extended follow-up of five of the eight uranium miner cohorts included in BEIR VI (*95*) and added additional cohorts from Canada and Germany (*534*). PUMA recorded 7754 lung cancer deaths with 4.3 million person-years of follow-up (*535*). There were similar patterns of temporal modification as for BEIR VI (*95*), with highly significant reductions in risk with increased attained age, time since exposure and higher exposure rate (*536*). In the full cohort the aggregate ERR/WLM was not significantly different if analysis was restricted to miners with cumulative exposure of <100 WLM or if restricted to those hired before 1960 (*536*); however, after exclusion of early miners (hired before 1960, when exposures were higher and associated with much larger uncertainties), the estimated ERR/WLM was approximately twice that for the full cohort (*537*) (see Supplemental Table S10; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Overall, findings from the BEIR VI and PUMA models are comparable and complementary, but PUMA includes twice as many uranium miners and about three times as many lung cancer deaths.

Smoking is the strongest risk factor for lung cancer, but unfortunately, most studies of miners did not take account of smoking habits. Nevertheless, available results indicate that the relationship between lung cancer mortality and radon exposure is not substantially confounded by smoking, with only marginal changes in the risk of radon-associated lung cancer upon adjustment for smoking. Most analyses are consistent with a sub-multiplicative interaction between radon exposure and smoking status (*95*, *530*). Further analyses are needed to improve the characterization of the joint effect of radon and smoking.

Other cancers. A pooled analysis of cancers other than lung in the 11 miner cohorts used by BEIR VI (*95*) suggested increased risks of leukemia, and cancers of the stomach and liver, but these did not correlate with cumulative exposure (WLM) and so the authors concluded that they were unlikely to be caused by radon exposure (*538*). There was a borderline significant trend with radon exposure for pancreatic cancer based on a small number of deaths (see Supplemental Table S10; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*538*). Since then, analysis of the German miners suggested non-significant excess risk of cancers of extrathoracic airways (most of them cancers of the larynx $n = 94$, but including cancers of the pharynx, $n = 74$, tongue and mouth, $n = 55$) (*539*), all smoking-related cancers (*540*). These do not materially add to the evidence for radon effects on any cancer except the lung (*530*).

Non-Cancer Risk

Analyses of French (*518*) and German uranium miners (*541*, *542*) suggest no significant radon-related excess risk for CVD, or other non-malignant disease (see Supplemental Table S10; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There are indications of γ-related CeVD risk among French (*518*, *543*) uranium miners, but for no other CVD endpoint there nor in German (*544*) miners.

Uranium Processing Workers

Uranium processing workers constitute only a small proportion of workers of the nuclear fuel industry and typically include workers involved in: milling; refining and conversion; enrichment; and reconversion and fuel fabrication. Of the more than 500,000 workers employed worldwide in the nuclear fuel cycle in the last 40-50 years, only 10-15% were involved in uranium processing (*545*, *546*). Only a few studies of uranium processing workers conducted dose-response analyses with individual radiation doses (*516*, *517*, *547–562*), and an even smaller subset used individually estimated doses from uranium or other radionuclides (see Supplemental Table S11; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*517*, *548*, *551*, *554*, *556*, *559–562*). A recent United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) report on biological effects of uranium summarized the evidence as indicating "a weak association of lung cancer risk with uranium exposure ... but the currently available results are not consistent enough to demonstrate a causal association", and unclear evidence for risks of leukemia, other lymphohematopoietic malignancies, digestive system cancers, kidney and other urological cancers with uranium exposure (*563*). These conclusions were echoed by a recent ICRP report (*564*). Since the publication of these two reports, several new studies have been published (*517*, *556*, *560*, *562*). While the conclusions with regards to cancer outcomes have not changed, the new studies provided mostly null evidence of a possible CVD effect from exposures to

uranium (see Supplemental Table S11; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*517*, *560*, *562*). Only one of these new studies (*560*) (the only one to yield a significant risk), and none of the older studies, had any information on the major lifestyle and medical/environmental risk factors for CVD, so the evidence must be regarded as somewhat limited.

Only one pooled analysis of uranium processing workers has been conducted to date (*565*) and an international Pooled Analysis of Uranium Workers (iPAUW) from 9 cohorts in five countries is underway (*565*). The lack of pooled studies is due to the complicated radiation exposure profiles of workers in this industry. Uranium processing workers are typically exposed to γ rays and long-lived radionuclides from uranium ore dust, but less to radioactive elements such as radium and radon which decay by emitting high-LET α-radiation radon decay products, typical for uranium underground miners. However, in some early uranium plants pitchblende was processed, which had a high radium content and high radon level exposures (*566*). This required specialized techniques to determine dosimetry.

Medical Radiation Workers

Landmark studies of radiologists in the United Kingdom (*567*, *568*) and the U.S. (*569*, *570*) that followed up workers first exposed during 1897–1920 and 1920–1939, respectively, and retrospective cohort studies of USRT (*571*), U.S. radiologists (*572*), Japanese (*573*), Chinese (*574*), Danish (*575*) and Korean medical radiation workers (*576*) reported increased risks, of leukemia most consistently, generally among those first employed before 1950 (or before 1970 in China) when occupational radiation exposures were high (*577*, *578*). A weakness of most of these studies is that there were no individual dose estimates, limiting their usefulness for quantitative risk assessment. Nevertheless, for some groups, for example the USRT and the Chinese and Korean medical workers cohort, individual dose estimates were generated, as we discuss below.

Cancer risk. Most of the medical radiation worker cohorts (*568–576*, *579–581*) restricted radiation-associated risks reported to standardized mortality (SMR) or incidence (SIR) ratios. These studies suggested higher rates of cancer-specific mortality, particularly amongst early medical radiation workers compared to reference populations. Since estimates of excess risk per dose were not calculated, these studies will not be considered further here. Estimates of elevated risk from the three main studies that examined cancer risks per unit of radiation exposure are summarized in Supplemental Table S12 (https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). The USRT cohort reported borderline significant ERR/Gy with radiation exposure for female breast cancer mortality, strongest (and statistically significant) for workers born before 1930 but no increased ERR/Gy for female breast cancer incidence for workers at any time point (*582*). No other malignancies demonstrated a significant dose-response (*583–587*). Korean diagnostic medical radiation workers showed no significant radiation dose-response for leukemia, all solid cancers or other individual cancer outcomes (*588*). Chinese medical radiation workers had a significantly increased ERR for all solid cancers, but dose-response findings were not reported for individual solid cancer or hematopoietic malignancy outcomes (*589*). The liver and lung were the most common outcomes (*589*). For these types of solid tumors, the authors pointed out the possible if not likely confounding by hepatitis, alcohol intake, and smoking consumption; however, such potentially confounding factors were not considered (*589*).

Non-cancer risk. In the USRT significant excess risks per dose were observed for self-reported cataract incidence (remaining statistically significant when analysis was restricted to <100 mGy) but not for cataract surgery (*522*) (see Supplemental Table S12; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), in a technologist cohort numbering 67,246 (for cataract incidence) or 67,709 (for cataract surgery). Dose-response was not significantly increased for glaucoma or macular degeneration in the USRT (*590*). The cohort of 11,500 Korean diagnostic medical radiation workers overall showed no evidence of excess morbidity or mortality from CVD nor did 53,860 Korean medical workers enrolled in the National Dosimetry Registry, both after relatively short follow-up (*520*, *591*).

Ongoing work and future directions. Although badge records during 1980–2015 for the entirety of 58,434 USRT have shown a steady decline from an annual median dose of 0.6 mSv in 1980 to minimal levels (e.g., below the limit of detection) in 2015, annual median doses were substantially higher and did not decline for the subset of technologists performing nuclear medicine procedures particularly those performing positron emission tomography (PET) and cardiac procedures (*592*), and there are indications of particularly high eye lens doses for medical staff believed to have performed or assisted with fluoroscopically guided procedures. More detailed dosimetry studies are in progress in the USRT and the Korean medical radiation workers and will be followed by cohort studies applying improved dosimetry to ascertain cancer and non-cancer risks per unit dose for medical radiation workers overall and for those performing or assisting with nuclear medicine and with fluoroscopically guided procedures.

Other Radiation Workers

As well as the groups of studies considered above and the Chornobyl cleanup workers (considered in the section dealing with the Chornobyl accident), there are relevant studies of other workers not included in these groups that are employed in several occupational sectors, such as commercial nuclear power, aviation and space exploration. The most informative studies pool information on similar workers and directly estimate cause-specific risks at a given radiation dose, which is vital to understanding low-dose effects for malignant and non-malignant disease. Cancer mortality is the endpoint most often examined, although information on cancer incidence and non-malignant

outcomes is also available. The predominant exposure assessed is low-LET-penetrating γ radiation. In general, risk estimation in these studies was hampered by restrictions in cohort size, follow-up, and dose distributions. Potential exceptions are pooled national and international studies that, through larger numbers and longer follow-up, are better positioned to elucidate radiation risks if there is uniformity in the methods of assessing radiation exposures; if analysis takes account (as it easily can) of differences in the background rates of the pooled studies, confounding can be controlled by statistical means. More important is that uniform methods be used for example in disease coding (but differences in efficiencies of ascertainment can be adjusted for statistically). Selected findings from some of these studies are discussed and shown in Supplemental Table S13 (https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) to illustrate the range of information available.

Cancer risk. Several studies have pooled information on radiation workers employed in Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Korea and the U.S., among others (*593–600*). The largest of these involves analysis of mortality in Japanese nuclear workers (*597*). There was a positive but non-significant trend with dose for all cancers excluding leukemia, but a negative trend for leukemia (*597*) (see Supplemental Table S13; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Although a strong association between radiation and alcohol-related cancers (upper digestive tract and liver) was found, a subsequent study of a smaller group of these workers that adjusted for self-reported lifestyle factors did not find evidence of confounding by alcohol (*599*). The study reported a marked decrease in mortality risk from all cancers excluding leukemia after adjusting for smoking (*599*). A subsequent examination of several self-reported risk factors further demonstrated the potential effects of smoking in these workers (*601*).

There are several studies examining cancer in commercial aircrew members exposed to cosmic radiation (*602–613*), the cumulative doses to whom, particularly those working repeatedly at high altitudes, can be considerable (e.g., >50 mSv) (*607*, *614–616*). Most studies have conducted comparisons with an external referent, resulting in observed cancers well below expected numbers, indicating strong healthy worker effects. Nevertheless, a recent meta-analysis combining these estimates have suggested increased breast cancer in female flight attendants compared with the general population (*611*); however, a separate meta-analysis of aircrew found no elevation in breast cancer risk associated with cumulative dose (*617*). There is also some evidence suggesting increased risk of malignant melanoma among aircrews, although ultraviolet radiation (UVR) exposure may well be a confounder. For example, there was modest excess mortality from melanoma (SMR = 1.57; 95% CI: 1.06, 2.25) in aircrews compared to the general population in a study pooling information from 10 countries (*609*). Other aircrew studies have reported increased melanoma risk in external comparisons with relatively few observed cases (*607*, *608*, *616*). In contrast, there is little evidence of positive dose-response patterns for any cancer in aircrew studies reporting estimates from internal comparisons (*606*, *608*, *612*, *613*).

U.S. atmospheric nuclear test veterans are included in the MPS (*510*), and other such military groups have been studied, in the UK (*618*, *619*), Australia (*620*, *621*) and New Zealand (*622*). The U.S. series is the largest, with n = 114,270 persons, but doses have only been fully validated for about 1.7% of these, the remainder of the cohort relying on scaled NuTRIS estimates (*510*). The UK study is the second largest, with n = 21,357 test participants and a matched set of n = 22,312 controls, with film-badge dose records available for about 23% of the test participants (*618*). Successive analyses have yielded consistent evidence of excess of leukemia associated with nuclear test involvement (*618*, *619*, *623–625*). However, the excess is not dose-related and remains unexplained.

Non-cancer risk. There was little evidence of increased risk of non-malignant diseases in studies of nuclear workers, commercial aircrews or astronauts (*595*, *598*, *599*, *606*, *609*, *616*, *626*).

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES EXCLUDING CHORNOBYL

This section is largely concerned with the effects of exposures to natural radiation but also covers environmental exposures to man-made radiation, excluding those from Chornobyl. The most radiologically significant of these exposures is to ^{222}Rn, a chemically inert gas that arises from the decay of ^{238}U, which is present throughout the earth's crust. People can be exposed to radon in dwellings and other buildings, mainly via seepage from the subsoil beneath buildings. If radon is inhaled, its short-lived progeny, including ^{218}Po and ^{214}Po, tend to deposit on the bronchial epithelium and hence expose sensitive cells to α radiation. Worldwide, exposure to radon and its decay products is responsible for nearly one half of the total effective dose from all sources of natural radiation (*627*).

As noted in previous sections, it took until the 20th century to identify radon as the most likely cause of the "miner's disease" (later known to be primary lung cancer) first described in cobalt (but also silver and bismuth) Schneeburg miners in the sixteenth century (*628*). Modern interest in natural radiation was stimulated by the efforts of UNSCEAR in the 1950s (*629*) to collect data on these exposures. The availability of regional exposure measurement data on radon and terrestrial γ rays, with or without cosmic rays, opened the way to studies to quantify associations between disease, particularly cancers, and radiation exposure. Radon and γ rays are quite different kinds of radiation, the former, high LET, and involving short-lived decay products, delivering very inhomogeneous doses across the body; the latter, low LET, and with much less variation in absorbed dose. Some of the early studies were ecological, speculative and

underpowered (*95*, *630*), whereas later better designed studies, including measurements in indoor dwellings, offered the prospect of providing direct evidence of the risks of low doses delivered at low dose rates.

Cancer Risk

Residential radon. Concentrations of radon in homes can vary considerably, depending on local conditions. As documented by UNSCEAR (*627*), some early investigations of the health impact of residential radon exposure used an ecological study design to compare geographical area-specific lung cancer rates and average radon levels. However, these ecologic studies were prone to bias, particularly because of their inability to take full account of potential confounding by smoking (*327*). Furthermore, radon concentrations may differ notably between homes within the same area. Consequently, most epidemiological studies of residential radon and lung cancer have used a case-control design, to collect individual-specific information on radon concentrations in homes occupied over much of the previous 15 years or more, and on smoking habits. Several systematic reviews/meta-analyses [e.g., (*93*, *631–633*)] have been conducted based on published findings from these studies. However, these systematic reviews/meta-analyses have been limited by variations between publications in the way that radon exposure has been categorized, and at least for those which include smokers (*93*, *632*, *633*), in how adjustment was made for the impact of smoking. Stronger evidence comes from pooled analyses that brought together individual data to investigate the consistency of different studies and estimate more precisely the association between lung cancer and radon. The largest combined analyses were conducted in Europe (*96*, *634*) and in North America (*97*, *635*); smaller combined analyses have been carried out in China (*636*) and, more recently, in Spain (*637*). A recent NCRP commentary (*524*) provides an informative summary of these studies of residential radon.

The results of these studies are summarized in Supplemental Table S14 (https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), and are seen to yield comparable risk estimates, similar also to those in recent meta-analyses (*93*, *631–633*). In both the European and the North American combined analyses, the data were consistent with a linear dose-response relationship with no threshold. Furthermore, there was no evidence that the ERR varied by sex or smoking status, nor, in the European analysis, by attained age; in contrast, there was slight evidence in the North American analysis that the ERR decreased with increasing attained age ($P = 0.09$). Both the European combined analysis and more recent meta-analyses that included studies from Europe reported significant associations between radon and lung cancer for both never-smokers and ever-smokers (*631*) and suggested that – amongst subtypes of lung cancer - the association with radon was particularly strong for small cell cancer (*632*). In terms of lung cancer overall, the results from case-control studies of residential radon exposures and from cohorts of recent uranium miners show reasonable coherence (*93*, *530*). So for example UNSCEAR (*627*) estimated a combined ERR/100 WLM = 0.59 (95% CI 0.35, 1.0) based on all occupational studies; a higher combined ERR/100 WLM estimate = 1.53 (95% CI 1.11, 1.94) was obtained when restricting the analysis to more recent work periods and lower exposures. Using a conversion between radon concentration and cumulative radon progeny exposure so that 100 Bq m^{-3} over 30 years = 13.2 WLM (*628*), UNSCEAR (*627*) estimated a combined residential ERR/100 WLM estimate = 1.21 (95% CI 0.38, 2.35), which is close to the above occupational estimate of ERR/100 WLM = 1.53 (95% CI 1.11, 1.94) at low exposure. It should be pointed that "the risk of lung cancer from exposure to radon is not expected to be the same for residents and miners because of the different conditions under which they are exposed" (*93*).

Quantification of the lung cancer risk linked to residential radon can be influenced by errors in measuring radon in homes, of both classical and Berkson type (*1*). In the European combined analysis, both the ERR per 100 Bq m^{-3} and the width of the associated confidence interval doubled, to 0.16 (95% CI 0.05, 0.31), after adjustment for both classical and Berkson measurement errors (*96*, *634*). Today, research on lung cancer and radon continues, including study of the molecular determinants of cancer, especially the role of somatic genetic drivers (*638*).

Compared with lung cancer, there have been fewer epidemiological studies of residential radon and other cancers (*639*) and dosimetric arguments suggest that doses to other tissues and therefore any other effects would be smaller (*640*). Many of these studies have followed an ecological design or using modeled estimates of individuals' exposure to radon. Findings from these studies have been variable, possibly reflecting differences in study design, and overall the literature does not support strong associations between radon and non-lung cancers (*639*), but further research on this topic is warranted (*638*), particularly focused on miner studies given the likely lack of statistical power at residential levels of exposure.

Childhood Cancer and Natural Radiation

Many epidemiological studies of naturally occurring radiation have focused on childhood cancer because of children's greater sensitivity, particularly for leukemia, and low background rates of disease, also because measurements of radiation exposure (as relating to age at diagnosis) are more likely to correlate with those in the relevant exposure period, in early life. The UK Childhood Cancer Study (UKCCS) (*641*, *642*) was both one of the largest, and also of case-control design. Even so, it was of borderline power and limited by selection bias, which occurs because parents of children with leukemia who belonged to all social classes agreed to participate in the

study whereas parents of healthy children who belonged to higher social classes (better educated, higher income and more interested in research) tended to preferentially participate (*641*). The problem of low statistical power affects almost all studies of childhood cancer in relation to radon exposure (*643*), even those of substantial size such as those in UK (*641*), Denmark (*644*) and U.S. (*645*); as can happen some [e.g., (*644*)] yield significant excess risk, suggesting the possibility of upward bias (*646*).

A number of register-based studies have been conducted (*644*, *647–654*); note that that of Spycher et al. (*655*) is updated and subsumed within Mazzei-Abba et al. (*654*). These register-based studies involved no contact with the study subjects and thus avoided the danger of selection bias. Importantly, they could more easily be of adequate power. However, it is not possible to make measurements of the radiation exposure of participants and doses must be estimated using models. Register-based studies of natural background radiation have been reviewed (*656*) and there have also been more general reviews of studies of radon and leukemia (*657–659*). The results of these record-based studies for leukemia and for CNS tumors are summarized in Supplemental Table S15 (https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1) (*644*, *647–654*). Several studies offer general support for very small increases in risks of these childhood cancers associated with exposure to terrestrial γ/cosmic rays or possibly to radon and are consistent with the existence of a dose-risk relationship even at low doses, although further work is desirable, with larger cohorts and improved dosimetry.

Areas of High Natural Background Radiation (HNBR)

Levels of natural background radiation vary from place to place and some geographic regions have dose rates several times the global average (*91*). Since large populations could be exposed to these high dose rates, a number of epidemiological studies were set up to try to detect and quantify any effects.

These studies were stimulated by the high radiation levels in the geographic region, in contrast to the register-based studies in the previous section which were stimulated by the existence of large and comprehensive registers of disease. The two best developed of these HNBR studies are set in Karunagappally, Kerala, India (*660*, *661*) and in Yangjiang, Guangdong Province, China (*662*). These two studies observed no increased risk of solid cancer with cumulative dose. Other ecologic studies have been conducted in Guarapari, Brazil, and in Ramsar, Iran. These studies have been reviewed by Hendry et al. (*663*), Boice et al. (*664*), NCRP (*10*) and UNSCEAR (*92*). Apart from questions of power, studies of HNBR have difficulties in finding suitable control areas, similar to the HNBR areas in everything except radiation dose. They also have various other problems (*92*), including those of lack of information and assessment of potential confounders and of dose estimation.

Other Environmental Exposures

Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident. The Great East Japan earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, resulted in breakdown of the reactor cooling systems in 3/6 reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi NPP, and over the ensuing few days meltdown of the cores of these reactors released 100–500 $\times$ 10^{15} Bq ^{131}I and 6–20 $\times$ 10^{15} Bq ^{137}Cs (*100*). This was the most serious nuclear accident apart from Chornobyl, although releases were a factor ~5–10 lower. Nevertheless, because of stringent measures to evacuate the population from affected parts of Fukushima prefecture [at least ~150,000 persons were evacuated (*100*)] and to restrict consumption of potentially contaminated food (*665*), the population exposure has been relatively much less serious than at Chornobyl. Nevertheless, there are substantial non-radiological impacts of the disaster, with a large increase in mortality among the displaced elderly population (*666*) and increased frequency of mental and metabolic disorders in impacted populations (*667*). An ultrasound thyroid screening study of Fukushima prefecture residents aged under 18 documented an increase in the prevalence of thyroid cancer, which the authors of the study attributed to the accident (*668*); but the results and conclusions of the study remain controversial, in that, for example, the increase is not confined to the contaminated areas of the prefecture (*669*, *670*). Today, this increase appears to be essentially attributable to the screening, with no relationship with radiation exposure (*671–673*).

Taiwan steel reinforcing bar study. A small study in Taiwan of persons exposed to steel reinforcing bars that had been accidentally contaminated with ^{60}Co yielded significant excess risk of leukemia excluding CLL, female breast cancer, all solid cancer and all cancer (*674*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Some of the doses in this study are substantial, with mean dose 0.0477 Gy (range <0.001–2.363 Gy) (*674*), but despite this the study is likely of very low power (*675*).

Studies Associated with Releases from Nuclear Reprocessing or Weapons Plants and Nuclear Weapons Testing

Environmental radiation associated with residential proximity to nuclear weapons plants and above ground nuclear testing has stimulated public interest and concern. Particularly in the early days, nuclear wastes were discharged from the plants into the atmospheric and marine/riverine environment. Early nuclear weapons tests were frequently conducted above ground with large consequent releases into the atmosphere. Many epidemiological studies have evaluated cancer and to a lesser extent other serious health outcomes associated with the radiation exposures and releases.

Techa River cohort. The Mayak nuclear plant in the Southern Urals associated with plutonium production for nuclear bombs in the former USSR, deposited large quantities of nuclear waste in the Techa River primarily during

1950–1956 (*92*); and all communities living downstream alongside and near the Techa River received substantial exposures to a mixture of external γ and internal exposures from ^{90}Sr and ^{137}Cs (mean bone marrow dose 0.29 Gy, range 0–9 Gy) (*105*, *676*). A cohort of persons born before 1950 and who lived in a community alongside the Techa River in the period 1950–1960 has been assembled, and a number of sets of individual organ doses estimated, the most recent being Techa River Dosimetry System (TRDS) 2009. There is a significant excess risk of solid cancer mortality (*676*) and leukemia incidence excluding CLL, as well as CML (*105*) in this cohort (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There is no significant non-linearity either for solid cancer mortality (*676*) or for leukemia (*105*).

Hanford study. Large quantities of ^{131}I were intentionally released to the atmosphere between 1944–1957 from the Hanford plant in Washington State during the production of plutonium for military purposes. A retrospective (historical) cohort study was set up to determine if thyroid disease is increased among those exposed to these releases at a young age (*677*). The cohort included a sample of all births from 1940 through 1946 to mothers with usual residence in seven counties in eastern Washington State. Participants were examined for signs of thyroid disease and their thyroid doses were estimated from residence and dietary histories obtained by interview. Thyroid dose spanned a considerable range (mean 0.174 Gy, range 0–2.823 Gy). There was no evidence of a relationship between Hanford radiation dose and the cumulative incidence of any of the thyroid-related outcomes (*677*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), although the power to detect an increased risk of thyroid cancer was low.

Sellafield and other studies of cancer clusters around nuclear installations. The cluster of childhood leukemia cases in Seascale, a village near the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant in the UK has been much investigated, together with a number of investigations of the apparent excess incidence around both Sellafield and other nuclear plants in the UK in relation to possible radiation exposures from the plants (*678–682*). Environmental exposure to radiation from discharges has been found to be much too low to explain these clusters (*683*). Studies have also been conducted in other countries (*684–686*), and the cluster of childhood leukemia cases around the Krummel NPP is particularly notable, but detailed investigations have not implicated discharges from the plant (*687*). Studies of areas where nuclear plants were planned but never built have also been carried out (*688*). A case-control study in West Cumbria, which includes Seascale, suggested that paternal preconceptional radiation exposure at Sellafield might explain the cluster of cases (*689*), but this association has not been generally confirmed in a number of other studies of this and other nuclear workforces (*690–692*). Population mixing in Seascale has also been suggested as an explanation (*693*), inspired in part by various investigations of Kinlen about unusual urban/rural population mixing in remote locations, based on a plausible hypothesis about rare response (leukemia) to some infective agent(s) (*694–696*). Several reviews have been performed on this question; no elevated risk of childhood leukemia near nuclear installations is observed globally, but the explanation for the observed clusters remain unclear (*697*, *698*). Of note in this respect is the remarkable cluster of childhood leukemia in Fallon, Nevada, which is not near any nuclear installation and remains unexplained (*699*).

Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests and Civilian Populations Exposed

Numerous studies have been conducted of the exposed populations associated with the various atmospheric nuclear bomb tests, for example in the Marshall Islands including the Castle Bravo test, the largest of the U.S. thermonuclear tests (*700–702*), but without linked radiation dose estimates for the exposed populations these do not yield quantitative radiation risks. Nevertheless, a number of assessments of the doses from these activities have been conducted with links to health outcome data.

About 100 atmospheric nuclear tests were carried out at the NTS. There have been two related investigations into possible associations between radioiodine releases and thyroid disease (*703*, *704*). A cohort of persons aged ~12–18 years in southwestern Utah, southeastern Nevada, and southeastern Arizona in 1965–1966 were assembled and subsequently examined for various types of malignant and non-malignant thyroid disease. Individual radiation doses to the thyroid were estimated by combining consumption data with radionuclide deposition rates. Doses ranged up to 4.6 Gy and averaged 0.17 Gy in Utah. Elevated risks of thyroid neoplasms and thyroid nodules were reported (*704*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). Leukemia in relation to external exposure has also been studied in a case-control study of persons exposed via the NTS, and borderline significant indications of excess risk observed, particularly for ALL ($P = 0.068$) and acute leukemia excluding CLL ($P = 0.084$), despite the fact that doses were very low (maximum RBM dose 0.026 Gy) (*705*).

The weapons tests conducted at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan from 1949 onwards resulted in considerable exposure of the local population, with doses spanning 0.07–4.14 Sv (*706*). Populations born before 1961 in 10 highly exposed settlements were followed for mortality for the period 1960-1999, along with those in 6 control settlements a few hundred km away (*706*). The dosimetry is somewhat crude, taking account only of the 8 largest tests, and also taking account of an individual's lifestyle, shielding, time of year, and whether evacuated during the 1953 test; internal as well as external dose was calculated (*706*). Because of doubts as to the comparability of the control groups, results presented using only the highly

exposed settlements are to be preferred, and demonstrate significant excess risk for all solid cancer, and cancers of the stomach and lung (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There is a small in utero group included, exclusion of which did not materially affect risk. Unusually, increasing age at exposure resulted in increased relative risk (exposed vs. not) (*706*). A prevalence study of malignant and non-malignant thyroid disease among persons exposed under the age of 21, an update of an earlier analysis of almost exactly the same dataset with improved stochastic dosimetry (*707*), suggested excess risk of thyroid nodules among males (but not females), although not of thyroid cancer (*146*) (see Supplemental Table S16).

The series of 41 weapons tests conducted between 1966–1974 in French Polynesia were less extensive than the above series. However, they have the advantage that high quality dosimetry was conducted on groups of participants, backed by a cancer registry. The mean thyroid doses are low (mean 0.0047 Gy, range 0-0.036) (*708*) and there is no excess risk of differentiated thyroid carcinoma (*708*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Non-cancer risks. Non-cancer effects of residential radon on the nervous system (e.g., Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neuron disease) have been studied, but there is no peer-reviewed literature documenting a significant excess radiation risk (*709*).

In the Semipalatinsk cohort, there was no significant radiation mortality risk of all CVD, heart disease and stroke from exposure to radioactive fallout, nor of hypertension or stroke prevalence (*710–712*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There was no significant mortality from all non-cancer diseases in the residents of the HNBR area in Yangjiang, China (*662*). However, a significant association between intima media thickening of carotid artery (a marker for the early stage of CVD development) and background radiation exposure has been reported in female residents of the HNBR area in Kerala, India (*713*). In residents of the HNBR area in China, there was a significantly increased risk for PSC and cortical lens opacities, but not of nuclear opacities (*714*) (see Supplemental Table S16).

CVD mortality has been assessed in the Techa River cohort followed during 1950-2003 (*483*). There are large but non-significant excess risks of CVD and IHD mortality when using 5-year lagged dose, although significance is only attained at conventional levels for both endpoints when (arguably implausible) lags of 15 or 20 years are employed (*483*) (see Supplemental Table S16; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

POOLED STUDIES

Pooled analysis of individual health records is a way of boosting statistical power, thereby enabling more precise estimates of risk, which for rare endpoints such as leukemia is of considerable concern. Pooled analysis, which uses individual health records, including dose, follow-up and outcome data combined from different studies, is distinct from meta-analyses, in which a systematic review of the literature is combined with a statistical weighting of the published results, and which has obvious limitations, for example in treatment of confounding variables and taking account of differences in background rates and calendar years of coverage. There have been a number of recent meta-analyses for ionizing radiation and cancer (*715–717*) and non-cancer (*449*, *718*, *719*) risks, which we shall not discuss further. In this section we briefly deal with pooled analyses considering more than one of the types of radiation-exposed population discussed above. Occupational pooling studies such as INWORKS (*466*, *482*), PUMA (*535*) or iPAUW (*565*) and medical diagnostic studies such as EPI-CT (*236*, *237*) or fluoroscopy studies (*252*) are discussed above in the relevant sections. Limitations of many pooled analyses include the lack of consideration of the type of radiation exposure (e.g., acute vs. fractionated vs. protracted), potentially important confounders, indications for treatment in populations undergoing diagnostic or therapeutic radiation procedures, and other possibly relevant but unrecorded factors that differ between the sub-studies that make up the pooling.

Cancer Risk

Leukemia and other hematolymphoid malignancies. Analysis of an earlier version of the LSS incidence data, UK ankylosing spondylitis mortality data and the International Radiation Study of Cervical Cancer Patients (IRSCCP) case-control study, assessed a total of 283,139 persons (*185*). There were significant excess risks of AML, CML, ALL and all leukemia, in each case the optimal ERR model being quadratic exponential in dose, with adjustment for time since exposure (for ALL, CML) or attained age (for AML) (*185*) (see Supplemental Table S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

A large international consortium assessed hematolymphoid malignancies in ten eligible datasets, representing all available groups exposed to radiation in childhood and adolescence (at June 2014), but excluding those treated for malignant disease, with a total of 310,905 persons (*720*). Over the full dose range there were significant linear ERR/Gy for AML, CML, and ALL, with upward curvature in the dose-response for ALL and AML, although at lower doses (<0.5 Gy) curvature for ALL was downwards (*720*) (see Supplemental Table S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). There was no significant overall inter-cohort heterogeneity in ERR/Gy for these three endpoints (*720*). In the analysis restricted to <0.1 Gy there were significant trends with dose for AML, AML + MDS, and ALL, but no clear dose-response for CML (*721*). There were no indications of inter-cohort heterogeneity or departures from linearity in the <0.1 Gy range (*721*). For AML +

MDS and for ALL, the dose responses remained significant for doses <0.05 Gy, indeed for ALL this was so for doses <0.02 Gy (*721*).

Additional analysis of lymphoma and multiple myeloma in 9 of these 10 datasets (among 143,136 persons) using RBM dose did not exhibit significant trends for any endpoint (*722*). However, in 6 cohorts with estimates of lymphatic tissue dose, significant increased trends with dose ($P = 0.02$) were observed for NHL+CLL (*722*) (see Supplemental Table S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

A pooled analysis of children born to Mayak workers or exposed from living near the contaminated Techa River suggested excess leukemia incidence and excess all hematolymphoid malignancy incidence after in utero exposure; no associations were observed in mortality analysis, which is presumably a less reliable endpoint, and numbers of deaths were substantially fewer (*723*) (see Supplemental Table S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1).

Thyroid Cancer

Analysis of 12 radiation exposed cohorts (most of the larger cohorts then available), an update of a previous analysis of 7 cohorts (*724*) documented a significant excess risk of thyroid cancer, with significantly downwardly curving dose response, ERR tending to decrease at doses >20 Gy (*725*) (see Supplemental Table S17). Four of these 12 studies were childhood cancer survivors, seven cohorts were treated for benign disease, and the LSS was also included (*725*). Doses for therapy for the benign diseases were over 5 Gy. Analysis restricted to <0.2 Gy or <0.1 Gy found significant dose response over both ranges (see Supplemental Table S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1), with no significant non-linearity (*726*).

Breast Cancer

The combined analysis of the LSS incidence and Massachusetts TB fluoroscopy mortality data suggested that the ERR was significantly higher in the LSS by a factor 2.11 (95% CI 1.05, 4.95), although the excess absolute risks (EAR) in the two cohorts were statistically compatible (*244*). There was more extreme heterogeneity, both for ERR and EAR, in an 8-cohort pooled analysis, which included these two cohorts (*428*). The analysis did not resolve this issue, but clearly risks were very different between the LSS, the Swedish benign breast disease study and the two Swedish hemangioma studies (*428*). The results support the linearity of the radiation dose response for breast cancer, highlight the importance of age and age at exposure on the risks, and suggest a similarity in risks for acute and fractionated high dose rate exposures with much smaller effects from low-dose-rate protracted exposures (*428*).

Non-Cancer Risk

Pooled analyses of CVD outcomes in the Massachusetts and CFCS fluoroscopy studies are discussed above.

THE FUTURE

New Statistical and Other Methodology to Improve Dose Estimation, Address Issues of Confounding and Reduce Bias

Interpretation of epidemiological studies of radiation exposures routinely face concerns about bias related to measured and unmeasured confounding, measurement error (broadly, including uncertainty in estimated radiation doses and measured confounders, and misclassification in outcomes), and incorrect model specification (*8–10*). Some recent statistical innovations in machine learning (ML) models, which can flexibly describe non-linear processes and take account of high order interactions while avoiding overfitting, have shown promise in reducing problems of model misspecification, and in some contexts overcoming challenges with control for measured confounders. By design, many ML models sacrifice a modest increase in bias against reduction in variance (*727*). They are of particular value in very large datasets and in settings where the number of explanatory variables may approach or exceed the number of records (*727*). These include the random forest (RF) algorithm (*728*), the stochastic gradient boosting machine (SGBM) model (*729*, *730*), and neural networks (NN) (*731*). RF models (*728*) have proved particularly popular, because of their flexibility, ease of use and statistical performance, and availability in many software packages (*732–736*). RF models with modifications to tree-expansion rules (*737*, *738*) and SGBM models have been applied to a large (~10,200) set of indoor γ measurements (*647*) to illustrate a prediction model that can be used to impute γ doses to locations lacking measurement, and the cross-validated predictive performance of the generalized RF model was superior to that of SGBM (*739*). Further work done on these data suggest that these models outperform most standard geospatial models. NN have been much used to segment image data (*740–742*), a necessary first step in radiation treatment planning as well as retrospective determination of organ dose, and there have already been many applications of ML methods to prospectively and retrospectively assess patient dose (*743*).

Approaches to address unmeasured confounders include random assignment to exposure (in trial settings), 'natural' experiments, instrumental variables (*134*, *744*), and use of negative controls (*745*, *746*); future work may make greater use of such approaches to address concerns about residual confounding (*747–749*). In particular, statistical methods designed to support causal inference under clearly defined identification conditions have been developed to address measured and unmeasured confounding. These methods have been applied in epidemiological studies of air pollution (*750*), but, to date, have not been applied in radiation

epidemiology studies. There are a number of sources of uncertainty in epidemiological studies, including dose uncertainty, incomplete disease ascertainment or inaccurate diagnoses, insufficient adjustments for age and sex and environmental factors such as smoking, and model uncertainties (*11*). These are discussed below.

Errors in classification of endpoints have the potential to bias dose response, particularly if a radiogenic endpoint is likely to be misdiagnosed as one that is not radiogenic. There are statistical methods of dealing with such errors, although they require that there be data that would enable misclassification probabilities to be estimated. This has been done in the LSS, using autopsy data to guide estimation of misclassification probabilities of cancer as non-cancer mortality; when this was done the magnitude of the non-cancer dose response was reduced by about 20%, but remained statistically significant (*751*). A comprehensive assessment of 26 low dose cancer epidemiology studies judged that the likelihood of bias due to misclassification or due to loss of follow-up, where this could be estimated, was small (*752*).

Despite the relatively high quality of radiation dose information in many epidemiological studies of radiation exposed populations (when compared to studies of chemical carcinogens, for example), measurement error remains an important concern in interpretation of studies. Approaches to address uncertainties in measures of radiation exposure have been recently reviewed (*753*) and many studies have implemented these methods (*139*, *183*, *187*, *188*, *413*, *414*, *422*, *754–761*). Often the effect of adjustment for dose error is quite modest (*675*). For most cancer endpoints radiation risk estimates have been derived for the low dose range via interpolation between the cancer risks observed among groups exposed at moderate and high levels of dose and the risk observed in an unexposed (or very low exposed) reference group. Crucial to the resolution of uncertainty in this interpolation are the modeling of the dose-response relationship and the importance of both systematic and random dosimetric errors for analyses of the dose response, both of which can result in bias (*134*). Dose measurement errors can arise in a number of different ways. In radiotherapy, for example, a machine may be used for delivering radiation doses to a patient, and these true values are randomly distributed around the measured dial setting on the radiotherapy apparatus, implying that the dial setting and error are independent, resulting in so-called Berkson error (*134*). Alternatively, the measured dose can be distributed at random around the true dose, in such a way that the true dose and error will often be independent, resulting in so-called classical error (*134*), as for example the determination of individual survivor location in the LSS (*762*). However, it is likely that there is also a Berkson error term, for example arising from use of average shielding transmission factors; methods have been developed for dealing with this (*763*).

One method that has been frequently used to correct for the effects of classical error is regression calibration (RC) (*134*). However, RC is known to yield biased estimates of trend when the magnitude of errors is large, or there is substantial curvature in the dose response (*134*, *764*, *765*). When errors are larger methods that take account of the full error distribution such as MCML (*413*, *414*, *422*) or the so-called 2DMC with Bayesian Model Averaging (2DMC+ BMA) method (*766*) or the Frequentist Model Averaging method (FMA) (*767*) are likely to perform better. A new type of extended regression calibration (ERC) model has been recently developed and tested (against MCML, RC, 2DMC + BMA and FMA) using synthetic datasets in which there was varying degrees of upward curvature in the true dose response, and varying (and sometimes substantial) amounts of classical and Berkson error (*768*, *769*). The statistical performance of ERC was generally superior to that of MCML, RC, 2DMC + BMA or FMA, for various magnitudes of Berkson or classical errors (*768*, *769*).

Although there is much to be said for detailed consideration and correction for confounders and for the effects of dose errors, the most fundamental way to get the precision needed to evaluate response at low doses is large cohort size. Given the limited opportunities to form new, large cohorts, pooled or meta-analyses provide an alternative. As noted above, pooling studies have been much used to get more accurate assessments, particularly of low dose risk, also more accurate estimates of interactions and effect modifications (*428*, *715*, *716*, *721*, *726*). Such studies are likely to be increasingly important. However, one of the issues in pooling and also meta-analysis is the selection of studies going into the evaluations. A large uncertain study may dominate over a smaller and higher quality investigation. Selective removal of each study in turn can be useful in at least highlighting sources of heterogeneity.

Studies that combine biological information with epidemiological data may also be important, such as those recently used for thyroid (*770*) and lung cancer (*771*). However, the tumor models used at least for parts of both studies, based on the so-called two mutation model (*772*) are very likely drastic simplifications of the underlying biology. It is likely that the true cancer models have many more than two-rate limiting stages and multiple pathways (*773*), possibly incorporating genomic instability (*774–776*).

New Populations and Data Sources

Future epidemiologic and dosimetry research has great potential for making novel discoveries by (a) leveraging new populations and data sources based on evolving radiation exposures, (b) expanded use of electronic records and corresponding advances in data linkages, (c) advances in genomic technologies, and (d) increasing emphasis on data pooling, particularly important for studies at low dose. Key considerations when taking advantage of these new populations and data sources is consideration of fundamental methodologic issues, in particular statistical power and avoidance of bias. Discovery will be facilitated by

promoting data sharing (*777*) and transparency in data sources and analysis (*778*) in radiation research.

Evolving radiation exposures of particular interest include both diagnostic and therapeutic medical radiation exposures as well as other little studied environmental and occupational exposures. From the recent EPI-CT studies of children and young adults described above reporting excess risks of brain tumors and hematological malignancies (*236*, *237*) questions remain about the notable variation in risk among countries participating in the study, and, despite state-of the-art dosimetry, incomplete ascertainment of CT examinations; there is a need for ongoing follow-up. To evaluate radiation-associated health effects in the millions of persons internationally who have undergone fluoroscopically guided and nuclear medicine diagnostic and therapeutic procedures (*779*, *780*), future epidemiologic studies will need to expand beyond the recently reported single populations (*287*, *288*, *781*, *782*) or meta-analysis (*783*) efforts, for example similar to the Harmonic project (*784*). Emphasis should be on assessing a wider spectrum of malignant and non-malignant outcomes. Continuing follow-up of the Japanese atomic bomb survivors will undoubtedly provide valuable new information about the pattern of radiation dose-response for all solid and type-specific cancers and for certain non-cancer outcomes. Future studies of populations exposed from the Chornobyl accident will pool data from follow-up studies of persons exposed *in-utero* at the time of the accident [e.g., via a study in Ukraine (*409*) to be combined with a similar (but as yet unpublished) study in Belarus], and will examine the genomic profile of follicular thyroid carcinomas and adenomas arising in radiation-exposed residents. For the nascent studies in South Korea, the U.S. and France to investigate cancer and non-cancer disease outcomes among workers performing or assisting with fluoroscopically guided procedures, consideration should be given to use similar protocols to facilitate pooling of the results. Monitoring of technological advances in diagnostic and therapeutic procedures will provide impetus for initiating new epidemiologic investigations with high-quality dosimetry in exposed patients and workers for public health and radiation protection purposes.

Given the public health priority to study the rapidly increasing numbers of cancer survivors, electronic databases can facilitate epidemiologic studies beginning with identification of cancer and mortality outcomes of survivors through linkage of survivor cohorts with nationwide cancer and mortality registries. The forthcoming U.S. Virtual Pooled Registry will soon enable this type of linkage in the U.S. (*785*, *786*). Future dosimetry efforts to support studies of cancer survivors include development of protocols for collection of DICOM data, harmonization of data across countries, and creation of approaches for accurately determining tumor location (*787*, *788*) and patient anatomy for cohort studies of cancer survivors. To address concerns about possible health effects in the large number of patients worldwide being exposed to higher-dose proton beam therapy, among whom many studies have already assessed local control and early toxicity of these and more conventional types of radiotherapy (*789–791*), new studies are underway in U.S. and Canada to assess cancer risks in pediatrically proton-beam-treated groups (https://www.pediatricradiationregistry.org/). Carbon-beam treatment, already being used in over 12 centers worldwide (*792*, *793*) (but none of them in U.S.), is likely to be increasingly important. Strategies are needed for high-throughput scanning of medical records to extract information needed for estimation of organ-specific radiation dose, and to collect detailed information about any concomitant chemotherapy as well as important demographic, lifestyle, and medical history (e.g., conditions and non-chemotherapy drugs) information for statistical adjustment since these data are not widely available in a standardized electronic form. The availability of substantial biobanks of genotype and phenotype data that exist in many countries are a considerable resource, that is already being used to assess risks of a number of types of disease and endpoints, and with increasing follow-up these will become increasingly powerful, in particular for studying radiation effects. The UK Biobank for example, a database of over 500,000 persons aged 40–69 at recruitment, represents an approximately 5% sample of the 9.2 million invited in the relevant age range, and has been followed for nearly 15 years, and plans for expansion include cancer treatment information (*794*). Even the largest of these internationally only include a relatively small proportion of the national population, but this may change. The Early Detection of Disease Research Platform study planned in the UK, with a planned recruitment of 5 million adults and prospectively ascertained lifestyle and medical data (*795*) is an example of the sort of dataset of a size that may facilitate assessment of radiation risk and its relation to other lifestyle and medical risk factors. Although it will be smaller (when recruitment is complete) than these UK datasets, the U.S. Connect cohort (https://dceg.cancer.gov/research/who-we-study/cohorts/connect) will have particularly rich phenotype data, and also spanning a much larger range of latitudes, so better able to investigate effects of UVR. For certain radiation-exposed cohorts, in particular the Mayak workers and the LSS there are substantial longitudinal biorepositories.

An important clinical and public health goal is to identify individuals with greater sensitivity to radiation as early in life as possible, to tailor their diagnostic and therapeutic procedures to avoid ionizing radiation to the extent possible. To this end, a roadmap is needed to determine the strategies from radiation biomarker discovery to implementation in patients (*796*). Since it is believed that the genetic contribution to radiation susceptibility is likely to follow a polygenic model, agnostic approaches are needed that use multi-dimensional genomic, transcriptomic, epigenomic and proteomic investigations in large populations exposed to moderate-to-high radiation levels and ideally with individual high-quality exposure

assessment and complete follow-up (*797*). Validation of biomarkers associated with radiosensitivity is critical. Somatic genomic, transcriptomic, and epigenomic studies, similar to the investigation by Morton et al. (*419*) are needed to identify the mechanisms of carcinogenesis of radiation-associated neoplasms occurring in excess in patients treated with radiotherapy and in other populations (e.g., thyroid adenomas, or breast cancer in lactating women) in residents living near Chornobyl (*409*, *430*).

Another key priority for radiation-associated adverse health outcomes of public health importance are assessment of risks at low doses and dose rates as reviewed by the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) (*798*). Low doses are of concern for cancer, CVD (*449*), cataract (*377*), possibly also in relation to neurocognitive effects (*718*, *719*) and adverse effects on the immune system (*799*). Unlike studies at high dose, there are substantial issues of statistical power and bias that must be considered in planning a study and thus maximizing power particularly for rare outcomes [e.g., for leukemia (*721*) and thyroid cancer (*726*)], implying maximization of size. However, as discussed above there are difficulties in use of pooling studies. Reduction of bias implies that information on the likely relevant confounders should be available. Maximization of statistical power also is best achieved if the population under study is at higher risk and the disease outcome is known/suspected to be moderately to strongly linked with increased radiation-associated risk, thus ideally restricting attention to sensitive groups. One example is those exposed early in life when there may be fewer potential confounders, although confounders may become present, and require adjustment for, in adulthood. Given the possibility of residual confounding the size of the radiation effect in comparison with those associated with potentially confounding factors must be borne in mind. Studies of persons exposed in adulthood, where the size of the radiation effect is generally relatively small compared with exposures in earlier life, combined with the presence of many lifestyle factors with substantial risks may mean that some bias may be unavoidable in studies of adulthood exposure to moderate and low dose (*675*). A major review led by investigators from the U.S. National Cancer Institute of 26 low dose studies (with mean dose <0.1 Gy) published since the BEIR VII report (*800*) assessed the likelihood of bias due to dose uncertainty, confounding, selection bias and outcome misclassification. In most of the 26 studies it was judged that the likelihood of bias in ERR/Gy away from the null associated with these issues was slight (*675*, *717*, *752*, *801–803*), suggesting that the likelihood of a spurious positive result arising from most of these studies was small.

DISCUSSION

We have documented the wide variety of epidemiological studies of ionizing radiation exposure focusing primarily on those that provide information on dose-response and related quantitative measures. There is reasonable consistency in the risks per unit dose that have been seen both for cancer and some non-cancer endpoints in most of the major studies, with the possible exception of groups receiving radiotherapy for cancer and non-malignant disease, where relative risks for cancer tend to be lower than in groups exposed at lower levels of dose (*316–318*) (see Supplemental Tables S1, S3, S4, S15, S17; https://doi.org/10.1667/RADE-24-00021.1.S1). The elevated underlying cancer rates in some of these groups, and the highly selected nature of the populations, for development of the first primary cancer, is a likely explanation. It is frequently observed that radiogenic ERR in groups at high underlying cancer risk are lower than in groups at lower risk (*244*, *804*); however, radiation-associated EAR are frequently higher in the groups with elevated underlying risk. For some types of cancer (e.g., thyroid cancer) cell sterilization effects from radiotherapy could account for part of the discrepancy (*725*, *805*). There continues to be controversy about the size or even the existence of cancer and other outcomes risk at doses below about 0.1 Gy whole body dose equivalent (*806–808*), but some large and pooled studies provide evidence of increased risks both for cancer (*236*, *237*, *466*, *721*, *726*) and for cataract (*522*).

There have been many surveys of the radiation epidemiology evidence, in particular by the ICRP (*4*, *809*, *810*), UNSCEAR (*8*, *92*, *93*, *392*) and the U.S. BEIR committee (*95*, *800*). Reviews by various other national and international bodies are conducted occasionally, in particular focusing on risks of low dose exposure (*10*, *675*, *717*, *801*, *802*).

Radiation dosimetry for epidemiological studies has advanced considerably in recent years, with very detailed and accurate computerized models of the human body for calculating dose to many organs and tissues from external exposure to penetrating radiations (X and γ rays, neutrons), and concomitant development of detailed models for internal exposure to radiations from radioactive materials taken into the human body by inhalation, ingestion, or other routes of exposure (*12*, *16*, *88*, *137*). In addition to being useful going forward, this allows more accurate retrospective estimation of doses in cohorts with risks previously reported in relation to earlier dosimetry. Stable chromosome aberrations have been used to validate the dosimetry in the Sellafield workers (*811*) and in the USRT (*757*); dicentrics, an unstable type of chromosome aberration, have been used to validate the dosimetry in a mixed Chornobyl-exposed group (*111*).

Epidemiological knowledge is increasing at levels of dose below 0.1 Gy and for doses received at low dose-rates. Further studies would be warranted to estimate risks at lower dose: e.g., around 0.01 Gy as recently recommended by NASEM (*798*), although such studies are challenging to conduct and interpret. There continue to be efforts to assemble larger and larger cohorts to obtain increased precision of estimates at low doses, such as by

pooled studies. The possibilities of bias, resulting from confounding and other factors substantially increases as the dose level is reduced, and made much more likely following exposure in adulthood (*675*).

Continued mechanistic developments and their integration with epidemiology are needed, e.g., with the adverse outcome pathway approach to determine parameters for biologically based dose response models (*812*).

Assessment of uncertainties in radiation dose is an important aspect of developing risk estimates and their uncertainties. New statistical methods for taking account of dose error have been the subject of much recent work (*764*, *765*, *768*, *813*), and some of these methods have already been applied (*183*, *422*, *760*, *761*). A recently published NCRP commentary addresses statistical methods that account for dose uncertainty (*814*).

It is clear from 125 years of observation on the health consequences of exposure to ionizing radiation that much has been learnt, with substantial impact on radiological protection for patients, general population and workers. There have been substantial clinical and public health benefits, in addition to radiological protection, of radiation epidemiology studies. With the launch of new large studies, with more pooling studies undertaken, it will be possible to provide more stable estimates of risks in subgroups. New studies are needed whose goal should be to enroll radiation-exposed underserved and minority populations with exposures to medical, environmental and occupational sources of radiation. Further investigations are needed of late effects in patients undergoing repeated (e.g., fluoroscopically guided diagnostic or therapeutic) interventions and high dose (nuclear medicine therapeutic) procedures. With the expansion of higher-dose diagnostic (PET/CT) and newer therapeutic modalities (proton and carbon radiotherapy) there is an urgent need to establish large cohorts to follow up on late effects. As susceptible population subgroups are identified in current and future studies, more tailored screening protocols and radiation safety recommendations can be implemented to reduce or prevent future radiation-related risks of these subgroups. Radiation epidemiologists are needed for emergency response were a nuclear accident (whether associated with a nuclear site or detonation) to occur. In the short term they would be needed to provide guidance on triage of large populations by level of exposure (e.g., separating the "worried well" from those needing medical care), including devising recommendations on administration of possible countermeasures (*815*). In the longer term they would be needed to set up rosters of people living in the exposed areas, and working with dosimetrists establish registers of the relevant measures of dose, and linking the exposed roster with population registers (which may need to be established) to enable long-term follow-up; all of these are necessary preconditions of any long term assessment of radiation effects in the exposed population (*816*). Further analysis is needed as well as continuing follow-up of existing nuclear (INWORKS and MPS) and medical radiation workers (USRT, Korean and Chinese) as well as pooling of uranium miners. In addition, medical workers performing fluoroscopically guided and nuclear medicine procedures require high-quality dosimetry and longitudinal epidemiologic investigation. Greater understanding of signaling mechanisms such as methylation and senescence will provide insights into a number of radiation-associated chronic diseases, and will require longitudinally organized registers of biosamples.

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