

Health Hazards Associated with Interviewing Antinuclear Activists

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The hazards of interviewing antinuclear activists have not, to this point, been well publicized. There are a number of hazards to be considered, all of which may result in very significant risks to the reporter during direct interviews.

Direct Hazards

It is not well appreciated, but during personal interviews with antinuclear activists, reporters will be sitting next to a person with perhaps 7 million mBq of radioactivity in his/her body, much of which is ^{40}K . Atoms of ^{40}K emit gamma rays of approximately 1.5 million electron volts of energy in every direction, which will go ripping through the air, the body of the interviewer, and the nearby building materials and will often escape into the outside environment, where small children may be present. Further, the source of this deadly radiation inside of the antinuclear activists has an incredibly long half-life of 1,300,000,000 years, which means that these activities will remain hazardous for generations and generations to come.

The bodies of these activists also contain perhaps 2,000 mBq of ^{226}Ra , a deadly radionuclide in itself, emitting high energy gamma rays in every direction and also having a very long half life (over 1,600 years). What is more important however, is that when this nuclide decays, it produces ^{222}Rn gas in the body, which passes through the bloodstream and is exhaled. Therefore, the interviewer, in addition to being exposed to the ferocious gamma rays of ^{40}K , is also being bathed in clouds of ^{222}Rn from the activists exhaled breath. The health hazards of radon are widely known. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates put the number of annual deaths nationwide due to radon exposures at between 7,000 and 30,000. The question is - how many of these deaths are due to the constant exhalation of these activists? Of course when one is being interviewed, metabolic rates are somewhat heightened, and with all of the talking, exhalation rates will be markedly enhanced over the average. So the exhalation of antinuclear activists could conceivably account for half or more of all of the radon-related deaths in the United States, with media reporters being particularly at risk.

While exhaling, antinuclear activists are also pouring out clouds of other radioactive materials. Their bodies contain perhaps 4 million mBq of highly radioactive ^{14}C , which has an incredible half-life of over 5,700

years and is converted to CO_2 in the body and exhaled, like radon.

Similarly, the bodies of antinuclear activists contain perhaps 600,000 mBq of tritium (^3H), a radionuclide produced in nuclear reactors. This highly toxic substance is also emitted as vapor in the breath and as well is constantly exuded from the body in sweat. With these antinuclear activists breathing and sweating all over these poor reporters, the levels of deadly radiation that they are exposed to are mind-boggling. They, their families, their children and everyone they contact are at extreme risk from these activists - it is apparent that protective measures must be taken.

Potential Hazards

Most antinuclear activists don't publicize this, but they are all secretly carrying around in their bodies on average about 180,000,000 atoms of plutonium! There is always a finite, if however small, chance that one of these activists could explode at any moment. If this were to happen, all of this plutonium could conceivably be spread across the entire United States. As it is well known that just a single decay of a radioactive atom can instantly induce cancer, considerably more than half of the United States population would be immediately at risk. Should two activists explode, our country could be wiped out instantly.

The Appropriate Response

As Dr. Gofman has taught us, "cancer and leukemia induction by radiation is proportional to dose right down to the lowest conceivable doses" and "it is a violation of the most fundamental human rights to impose risks (deaths) upon individuals without their consent." (John Gofman, *Radiation and Human Health*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1983).

The risks detailed above are entirely unacceptable. Antinuclear activists should be isolated immediately for their own safety, the safety of the news media, and the safety (not to mention peace of mind) of the rest of the country. A national campaign should be mounted to warn media reporters about the possible risks of coming close to these activists. Fact sheets including the information above should be widely circulated, and the identities of the known antinuclear activists should be publicized. This public menace must be stopped.

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