

ECRR - CERI
European Committee on Radiation Risk
Comité Européenne sur le Risque de l'Irradiation

The Lesvos Declaration

6th May 2009

A. Whereas, the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) has promulgated certain risk coefficients for ionizing radiation exposure,

B. Whereas, the ICRP radiation risk coefficients are used worldwide by federal and state governmental bodies to promulgate radiation protection laws and standards for exposure to workers and the general public from waste disposal, nuclear weapons, management of contaminated land and materials, naturally occurring and technologically enhanced radioactive materials (NORM and TENORM), nuclear power plant and all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle, compensation and rehabilitation schemes, etc,

C. Whereas, the Chernobyl accident has provided the most important and indispensable opportunity to discover the yields of serious ill health following exposure to fission products and has demonstrated the inadequacy of the current ICRP risk model, especially as applied to foetal and early childhood exposures to radiation,

D. Whereas, by common consent the ICRP risk model cannot validly be applied to post-accident exposures, nor to incorporated radioactive material resulting in internal exposure,

E. Whereas, the ICRP risk model was developed before the discovery of the DNA structure and the discovery that certain radionuclides have chemical affinities for DNA, so that the concept of absorbed dose as used by ICRP cannot account for the effects of exposure to these radionuclides,

F. Whereas, the ICRP has not taken into consideration new discoveries of non-targeted effects such as genomic instability and bystander or secondary effects with regard to understanding radiation risk and particularly the spectrum of consequent illnesses,

G. Whereas, the non-cancer effects of radiation exposure may make it impossible to accurately determine the levels of cancer consequent upon exposure, because of confounding causes of death,

H. Whereas, the ICRP considers the status of its reports to be purely advisory,

I. Whereas, there is an immediate, urgent and continuing requirement for appropriate regulation of existing situations involving radioactivity, to protect the human population and the biosphere,

We the undersigned, in our individual capacities

1. assert that the ICRP risk coefficients are out of date and that use of these coefficients leads to radiation risks being significantly underestimated,
2. assert that employing the ICRP risk model to predict the health effects of radiation leads to errors which are at minimum 10 fold while we are aware of studies relating to certain types of exposure that suggest that the error is even greater,
3. assert that the yield of non-cancer illnesses from radiation exposure, in particular damage to the cardio-vascular, immune, central nervous and reproductive systems, is significant but as yet unquantified,
4. urge the responsible authorities, as well as all of those responsible for causing radiation exposures, to rely no longer upon the existing ICRP model in determining radiation protection standards and managing risks,
5. urge the responsible authorities and all those responsible for causing exposures, to adopt a generally precautionary approach, and in the absence of another workable and sufficiently precautionary risk model, to apply without undue delay the provisional ECRR 2003 risk model, which more accurately bounds the risks reflected by current observations,
6. demand immediate research into the health effects of incorporated radionuclides, particularly by revisiting the many historical epidemiological studies of exposed populations, including re-examination of the data from Japanese A-bomb survivors, Chernobyl and other affected territories and independent monitoring of incorporated radioactive substances in exposed populations,
7. consider it to be a human right for individuals to know the level of radiation to which they are exposed, and also to be correctly informed as to the potential consequences of that exposure,
8. are concerned by the escalating use of radiation for medical investigation and other general applications,
9. urge significant publicly funded research into medical techniques which do not involve radiation exposures to patients.

Statements contained herein reflect the opinions of the undersigned and are not meant to reflect the positions of any institution to which we are affiliated.

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