Sabella, AnnaLee (NIH/NIEHS)

From: Peter Lu
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2003 12:39 PM
To: 'jameson@NIEHS.nih.gov'
Subject: Comment on use of x-ray

Dear Dr. Jameson:

I would like to make a comment on x-ray being considered as a carcinogen. Many distinguished experts have demonstrated enough evidence to qualify X-ray for the listing. I would like to see x-ray listed as a carcinogen because of the evidence and its possible positive impact on the medical industry. Without considering a positive social impact, the listing may not be as meaningful. And I hope that this new listing will have a positive impact on the medical industry, which would eventually help reduce the risk to the public because medical x-ray is the primary source that poses X-ray induced danger to the public.

Medical doctors are trained to follow rules. Most doctors do not have a first hand knowledge about the danger of x-ray to the patients. They know patients who receive X-ray would not die immediately because of X-ray while they have no way to know what happens to the patients years later. One argument from those who tend to abuse the use of x-ray is that people get x-ray from their environment anyway. They would further argue that one dose of x-ray for a medical diagnosis is equivalent to a yearly dose a person gets from the environment. Because of this, they tend to think that X-ray is safe if a patient does not receive X-ray too much and or too often, and in practice they would use X-ray whenever possible.

By logic, normal human beings should be able to handle the risk caused by the exposure to the natural X-ray because we have existed in the nature for so many years. We should have acquired the mechanism to handle the X-ray exposure from the environment. However, this does not mean the human beings can handle the risk imposed by man-made medical X-ray. When the medical X-ray is used, it's focused on certain region and delivered in a matter of a few seconds, which by logic would create a big impact on the body. Because we human beings are not used to handle such an impact, its' no wonder to see that some people will suffer from such a radiation years later.

It seems to me that the evidence is sufficient. Listing X-ray as a carcinogen will make it known to the public that X-ray is not harmless no matter how much

an individual gets exposed to. This awareness will make the medical professionals
more cautious as to the use of X-ray. Downplaying the danger of medical X-ray will do more harm than good to the public.

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,

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