

sure to 10 other substances, some of which are likely to be correlated with occupational exposure to nickel.

Although Ojajärvi *et al*¹ are to be congratulated on their investigation of the aetiology of pancreatic cancer, it is my opinion that their results are most appropriately viewed as hypotheses that require further investigation, rather than compelling evidence that links substances to the induction of pancreatic cancer. As Ojajärvi *et al*¹ correctly suggest, research to test these hypotheses requires large studies and more refined measures of exposure. With respect to nickel and nickel compounds, data from large studies that were not included in the analysis of Ojajärvi *et al*¹ call into question the veracity of a hypothesis that links nickel exposure to increased risk of pancreatic cancer.

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Ojajärvi and Partanen reply

We thank Seilkop for his comment and have, in essence, not much to add to it. The study by Shannon *et al*¹ had obviously been overlooked and the study by Arena *et al*² was published after our deadline for the inclusion of studies.

Seilkop's table has errors for the study by Andersson *et al*³. The number of pancreatic cancer deaths should be 2; relative risk should be 1.2; and 95% confidence interval should be 0.1 to 4.5.

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Air pollution research databases

I write to inform your readers that the MRC Institute for Environment and Health is compiling two databases on research in air pollution (including indoor air pollution).

These databases are designed to provide funding bodies and policy makers with an up to date source of information which they may use to:

- Identify people and groups with expertise in particular aspects of air pollution research
- Obtain information on current topics of air pollution research
- Identify gaps in research on air pollution
- Identify new advances in the air pollution field
- Assist in the prioritisation of future research on air pollution.

We encourage all researchers in the field to submit information on their work for inclusion in either or both these databases:

- *The air pollution research database (APRED)*. This will hold data on research into indoor and outdoor air pollution within the United Kingdom. Its particular focus is on the individual researchers, their expertise and areas of interest. It is being prepared on behalf of the United Kingdom Department of Health and the Department of the Environment, Transport, and Regions.
- *The CEFIC database*. This will hold data on research being done on indoor air pollution in Europe, including the United Kingdom. Its primary intention is to identify all current research projects in the area. It is being prepared on behalf of the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC).

During development the databases will be held within the Institute, but in due course they will be made available through an internet website, in a searchable format.

The Institute is currently in the process of identifying the names and contact details of researchers in the United Kingdom so that they may be sent a questionnaire seeking certain information to enter onto the databases—for example, details about their research, project abstracts, research interests of each person, and details about their organisation.

All interested people should please go to the website address: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ieh/update/update.html#database> which gives a brief outline of the projects, and describes how to obtain a questionnaire and more information on the databases.

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CORRECTION

Personal exposures of children to nitrogen dioxide relative to concentrations in outdoor air. C H LINAKER, A J CHAUHAN, H M INSKIP, S T HOLGATE, D COGGON. 2000;57:472-6

Unfortunately an authors' error occurred in this paper in the conversion of concentrations of outdoor nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from ppb to µg/m³. As a consequence, all of the NO₂ measurements that were reported in outdoor air should be multiplied by a factor of 3.53. The correlations with personal NO₂ measurements are unchanged, as is the interpretation of our findings. Although higher than originally indicated, the outdoor NO₂ concentrations were nevertheless relatively low.

NOTICES

Nordic and National Training Centres Courses and Symposia 2001

Work and stress: somatic effects of physical and mental work

18-23 February, 2001, Geilo Hotel, Geilo, Norway

From intensive work systems to sustainable work systems

13-16 March, 2001, Ljungbergsgården, Tynningö, (Stockholm), Sweden

Challenges of ageing of the workforce

2-8 April, 2001, Hotel Riekonlinna, Saariselkä, Lapland, Finland

Research dissemination

22-26 April, 2001, Ljungbergsgården, Tynningö (Stockholm), Sweden

Safety research

10-15 June, 2001, Metalworkers' Murikka Institute, Tampere, Finland

Bullying and harassment at work

11-15 June, 2001, Hotel Eckerö, Åland, Finland

Introduction to occupational epidemiology

21-25 August, 2001, Hotel Gentofte, (Copenhagen), Denmark

Occupational exposure limits: approaches and criteria

23-28 September, 2001, Hotel Linné, Uppsala, Sweden

Occupational dermatology

11-16 September, 2001, Sokos Hotel Kuusamo, Kuusamo, Finland

Molecular toxicology: molecular epidemiology

14-19 October, 2001, Tallinn, Estonia

Intervention projects in the health care sector

21-25 October, 2001, Nordic School of Public Health, Gothenburg, Sweden

Risk assessment as a basis for the selection of personal protective equipment

28 October - 2 November, 2001, Medical Academy of Latvia, Riga, Latvia

A sister organisation to NIVA is the Nordic School of Public Health.

For more information about NIVA, visit our web-site: www.niva.org

For further information about their courses and seminars, please contact: Nordic School of Public Health, Box 12 133, SE-402 42 Göteborg, Sweden. Tel 0046 31 69 39 00; fax 0046 31 69 17 77; www.nhv.se

5th Annual Conference on Self Directed Learning in General Practice. 24th April 2001. London, UK.

Organised by the Open Learning Unit, University College London, and sponsored by the British Medical Journal. The conference will be organised around the themes of:

- Revalidation
- Web based learning resources for self directed learning.

The day will be based around small group workshops, with some offering hands on training in the use of on line learning resources. Places will therefore be strictly limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis.