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STEPHEN G. SCHWARZ IN SUPPORT OF
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Format: Abstract

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Mortality among employees of a perfluorooctanoic acid production plant.

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Author information

Abstract

Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) has been found at low levels (10 to 100 parts per billion) in sera of the general population and at higher levels in occupationally exposed workers. Although PFOA has been reported to be a promoter of rodent hepatocarcinogenesis and to alter reproductive hormones in humans and rodents, there is little information on human health effects associated with PFOA exposure. The present study examined the relationship between PFOA and mortality using a retrospective cohort mortality design. The cohort consisted of 2788 male and 749 female workers employed between 1947 and 1983 at a plant that produced PFOA. The all-causes standardized mortality ratio was .75 (95% confidence interval [CI], .56 to .99) for women and .77 (95% CI, .69 to .86) for men. Among men the cardiovascular standardized mortality rate was .68 (95% CI, .58 to .80) and the all-gastrointestinal diseases was .57 (95% CI, .29 to .99). There was no significantly increased cause-specific standardized mortality ratio for either men or women. Ten years of employment in exposed jobs was associated with a 3.3-fold increase (95% CI, 1.02 to 10.6) in prostate cancer mortality compared to no employment in PFOA production. There were only six prostate cancer deaths overall and four among the exposed workers; thus, the results must be interpreted cautiously. If prostate cancer mortality is related to PFOA, PFOA may increase prostate cancer mortality by altering reproductive hormones in male workers.

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