

JAPANESE CANCER ASSOCIATION

GANN Monograph on Cancer Research No.32

# CANCER IN ATOMIC BOMB SURVIVORS

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## GANN Monograph on Cancer Research

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The planning for each volume is done by the Board of Executive Directors of the Japanese Cancer Association, with the final approval of the Board of Directors. It is hoped that the series will serve as an important source of information in the field of cancer research.

Japanese Cancer Association

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## PREFACE

Follow-up studies of persons exposed to medical radiation have long shown that radiation induces cancer in man. This, coupled with increasing exposure from other sources including occupational and environmental radiations, has resulted in greater recognition of the importance of research on radiation-induced carcinogenesis and risk assessment with a view to radiation protection.

One of the well-known late effects of radiation is the increased incidence of leukemia that occurred among atomic bomb survivors beginning two or three years after exposure. A remarkable increase of solid tumors including cancers of the thyroid, breast and lung was also observed 10 to 20 years after exposure. Thus, many pathological, clinical and epidemiological studies have been made on radiation carcinogenesis in atomic bomb survivors by investigators at the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC), now known as the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF), as well as by the staff of universities in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some of the mechanisms involved in radiation carcinogenesis in man and associated modifying factors, such as age at time of exposure and sex, have been elucidated by these studies. The results obtained are being used by such agencies as the International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP) for risk estimations of radiation exposure.

This monograph presents the results realized thus far in these epidemiological and pathological studies. The incidence of radiation-induced cancer among atomic bomb survivors continues to be high 40 years after exposure, and much remains unknown about radiation carcinogenesis. It is hoped that this publication will stimulate the promotion of further studies.

Questions were raised recently on the dosimetry system which has been used as the basis for estimating the risks of carcinogenesis in atomic bomb survivors. As a consequence, a joint reassessment was undertaken some years ago by the U. S. and Japan.

It had been hoped that this radiation dosimetry reassessment, the status of which was reported and discussed at workshops in 1981, 1983 and 1985, would be available for the analyses presented in this monograph. Regrettably, due to the complex nature of the matter a report at the workshop in March 1986 stated that completion of the task was still several months away. Further delay, therefore, in release of this monograph does not appear justified.

It is clear from earlier reports that the estimated radiation dose from neutrons will be sharply reduced and that the estimated gamma dose will increase in Hiroshima, but will decrease slightly in Nagasaki. The shape of the dose-response curve and magnitude of risk coefficients may be altered slightly, but preliminary analyses based on incomplete data suggest that no major change will occur in the determination of the relation of radiation to cancer occurrence.

Many people have contributed to the production of this monograph. In particular,

we wish to commend Dr. Hiroo Kato, Dr. Suminori Akiba, and Mr. Geoffrey Day for their invaluable editorial assistance and Mrs. Merry Y. Uemoto for her expert word processing.

May 1986

I. SHIGEMATSU  
A. KAGAN

PREFACE

Follow-up studies of persons exposed to medical radiation have long shown that radiation induces cancer in man. This, coupled with increasing exposure from other sources including occupational and environmental radiation, has resulted in greater recognition of the importance of research on radiation-induced carcinogenesis and this research with a view to radiation protection.

One of the well-known late effects of radiation is the increased incidence of leukemia. In a certain group of atomic bomb survivors, the incidence of leukemia after exposure to a relatively small dose of ionizing radiation, including cancer of the respiratory tract and lung was also elevated 10 to 20 years after exposure. Thus, many pathological, clinical and epidemiological studies have been made on radiation carcinogenesis in human beings. In the United States, the Atomic Health Effects Research Foundation (AHERF), now known as the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF), as well as in the United Kingdom in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, some of the most intensive research in radiation carcinogenesis in man and animals has been carried out. The results obtained are being used by such agencies as the International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP) to the estimation of radiation exposure.

This monograph presents the results obtained thus far in these epidemiological and pathological studies. The incidence of radiation-induced cancer among atomic bomb survivors continues to be high 40 years after exposure, and much remains unknown about radiation carcinogenesis. It is hoped that this publication will stimulate the progress of further studies.

Questions were raised recently on the dosimetry system which has been used as the basis for estimating the rates of carcinogenesis in atomic bomb survivors. A common international system for radiation dose is being used by the U. S. and Japan. It has been hoped that this radiation dosimetry system, the status of which was reported and discussed at workshops in 1981, 1983 and 1985, would be available for the analyses presented in this monograph. Unfortunately, due to the complex nature of the matter a report in the workshop in March 1986 stated that completion of the task was still several months away. Further delay, therefore, in release of the monograph was not avoidable.

It is clear from earlier reports that the estimated radiation dose from neutrons will be fairly reduced and that the estimated gamma dose will increase in Hiroshima, but will decrease slightly in Nagasaki. The shape of the dose-response curve and magnitude of the coefficients may be altered slightly, but preliminary analyses based on incomplete data suggest that no major change will occur in the determination of the relation of radiation to cancer rates.

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## CONTENTS

Preface .....	v
Sampling of Atomic Bomb Survivors and Method of Cancer Detection in Hiroshima and Nagasaki .....	1
I. SHIGEMATSU and S. AKIBA	
Atomic Bomb Dosimetry for Epidemiological Studies of Survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki .....	9
T. MARUYAMA	
Tumor and Tissue Registries in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.....	
T. MONZEN and T. WAKABAYASHI	29
The Cancer Registry in Nagasaki City, with Atomic Bomb Survivor Data, 1973-77 .....	41
T. IKEDA, I. HAYASHI, T. MATSUO, H. MAEDA, and I. SHIMOKAWA	
Cancer Mortality .....	53
H. KATO	
Methods for Study of Delayed Health Effects of A-Bomb Radiation .....	
E. P. RADFORD, D. PRESTON, and K. J. KOPECKY	75
Experimental Radiation Carcinogenesis in Rodents .....	
K. YOKORO, T. SEYAMA, and K. YANAGIHARA	89
Leukemia, Multiple Myeloma, and Malignant Lymphoma .....	
M. ICHIMARU, T. OHKITA, and T. ISHIMARU	113
Cancer of the Thyroid and Salivary Glands .....	
H. EZAKI, T. ISHIMARU, Y. HAYASHI, and N. TAKEICHI	129
Malignant Tumors in Atomic Bomb Survivors with Special Reference to the Pathology of Stomach and Lung Cancer .....	
T. YAMAMOTO, I. NISHIMORI, E. TAHARA, and I. SEKINE	143
Colorectal Cancer among Atomic Bomb Survivors .....	
H. NAKATSUKA and H. EZAKI	155
Breast Cancer in Atomic Bomb Survivors .....	
M. TOKUNAGA, S. TOKUOKA, and C. E. LAND	167
Ovarian Neoplasms in Atomic Bomb Survivors .....	179
S. TOKUOKA	
Author Index .....	191
Subject Index .....	193