

Differential correlation of medical/laboratory examinations with blood levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, polychlorinated quarterphenyls and 2,3,4,7,8-pentachlorodibenzofuran in Yusho patients from 2001 to 2004

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Abstract

[Background]

The Yusho poisoning incident, which was caused by rice bran oil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polychlorinated quarterphenyls (PCQs) and 2,3,4,7,8-pentachlorodibenzofuran (PeCDF), occurred in 1968 in western Japan. Annual physical, dermatological, dental, ophthalmological and laboratory examinations were conducted for Yusho patients after the incident. From 2001, blood levels of PeCDF were also measured. The blood levels of PeCDF/PCB/PCQ in Yusho patients were found to be significantly higher than those of the general population. We investigated the relationships between blood levels of PeCDF/PCB/PCQ in Yusho patients and the items measured in the annual medical examination.

[Subjects and methods]

Medical and laboratory examination data from 501 Yusho patients enrolled in the study from 2001 to 2004 were analyzed. The relationship between blood PeCDF/PCB/PCQ levels and medical/laboratory examination data were investigated using principal components and logistic regression analyses.

[Results]

Levels of 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ in blood tended to correlate with either acneform eruptions, black comedones, cutaneous and mucosal pigmentation, and hypersecretion of meibomian glands as well as general fatigue, headaches, cough/sputum, abdominal pain, arthralgia, increased blood sugar, increased serum γ -GTP and decreased total bilirubin. The majority of these signs and symptoms are included in the diagnostic criteria for Yusho.

[Conclusions]

After Yusho patients had suffered chronic exposure to these chlorinated compounds for

more than 35 years, the level of PeCDF in blood was significantly related to arthralgia and decreased A/G ratio; the level of PCB was significantly related to ophthalmologic symptoms; and the level of PCQ to increased total cholesterol.

[Keywords]

Yusho, polychlorinated biphenyls, polychlorinated quarterphenyls,
2,3,4,7,8-pentachlorodibenzofuran, dioxins

Introduction

Yusho was a food poisoning incident that occurred in western Japan in 1968 [Masuda Y. 2005; Furue *et al.*, 2005; Kuratsune *et al.*, 1996; Yamaguchi *et al.*, 2002; Imamura *et al.*, 2003; Kanagawa *et al.*, 2005]. The cause of the poisoning incident was the oral intake of edible rice bran oil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polychlorinated quarterphenyls (PCQs) and 2,3,4,7,8-pentachlorodibenzofurans (PeCDFs), which are a type of dioxin generated from heat-denatured PCBs. Thirty-seven years have passed since the Yusho incident occurred, and more than 1,800 patients are known to have been affected.

With recent advances in techniques for measuring dioxins such as PeCDF, it has become possible to precisely measure PeCDF blood levels using as little as 5ml of blood, [Iida T *et al.*, 2003; Todaka I *et al.*, 2003]. Thus, measurements of PeCDF blood levels have been initiated since 2001 in the routine mass screening of Yusho patients. The mean blood levels of PeCDF in these patients have been shown to be more than 10 times higher than those in normal controls [Furue *et al.*, 2005].

In this study, we analyzed the results of medical examinations of Yusho patients whose blood PeCDF levels were measured from 2001 to 2004, and investigated the relationships between PeCDF blood levels and the clinical data from physical and laboratory examinations.

Methods

Subjects and medical check items

The Yusho Study Group conducts annual health checks of Yusho patients. Between 2001 and 2004, a total of 501 individuals (81 individuals in 2001, 371 in 2002, 343 in 2003, and 292 in 2004) underwent the Yusho mass screening. In addition to blood PeCDFs, PCBs and PCQs levels, 241 check items (52 items in a questionnaire, 55 physical and laboratory

examinations, 21 dermatological examinations, 108 dental examinations, and 5 ophthalmological examinations) were carried out (Table 1).

Statistical analysis

The relationships between blood PeCDF levels and the physical/laboratory test items were analyzed using logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression analysis uses a formula to relate several explanatory variables to objective ones (2 values). We used the following equation which included results [y] and several factors [x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n] affecting these results.

Explanatory variables ↓

$$g(x) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_n x_n$$

↑

Coefficient

Objective variables ↓

$$y = \frac{e^{g(x)}}{e^{g(x)} + 1}$$

Using principal components analysis (extracting factors using 1 or a higher characteristic value as a variable), we extracted 49 items, including 13 questionnaire-related items, 11 physical and laboratory examination items, 10 dermatological examination items, 12 dental examination items and 3 ophthalmological examination items, as representative variables (Table 2). The following patterns were set as objective variables for our logistic regression analyses:

- 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level

2 categories: [≥ 50 pg/g lipids] and [< 50 pg/g lipids] (Refer to the diagnostic criteria [Furue *et al.*, 2005])

- PCB blood level

2 categories: [≥ 2.0 ppb] and [< 2.0 ppb] (Categorized by median value)

- PCQ blood level

2 categories: [≥ 0.10 ppb] and [< 0.10 ppb] (Refer to the diagnostic criteria [Furue *et al.*, 2005])

- Other examination items

Normal/abnormal categories

To conduct analyses on the above 3 patterns, 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ blood levels were added to the explanatory variables.

SPSS11.5J for Windows was used for the analyses.

Results

Logistic regression analysis (Table 3)

2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level as an objective variable (Table 3-1)

When the 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level was used as an objective variable, in addition to items included in the diagnostic criteria such as PCB and PCQ blood levels, blood glucose level, arthralgia, gender, total bilirubin, black comedones, acneform eruption, past history of skin pigmentation and acneform eruption, increased A/G ratio, abnormal respiratory sounds, blood potassium level, and total cholesterol showed less than a 0.05% level of significance. Most of these items are considered characteristic symptoms of Yusho. Even when PCB and PCQ blood levels are excluded from the explanatory variables, older age, A/G ratio, general fatigue, arthralgia, gender and oral pigmentation showed less than a 0.05% level of significance.

By contrast, when an item other than 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level was used as an objective variable, items which showed less than a 0.05% level of significance for 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level, an explanatory variable, included PCQ/PCB blood levels,

arthralgia, presence or absence of previous history since 1968, A/G ratio, and blood glucose level.

PCB blood level as an objective variable (Table 3-2)

When PCB blood level was used as an objective variable, PeCDF blood level, sputum, age, female gender, past history of pigmentation and acneform eruption, toe nail pigmentation, hepatomegaly, headache, cheesy secretion from meibomian glands, total bilirubin, and general fatigue showed less than a 0.05% level of significance. When 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level was excluded from the explanatory variables, age, sputum, past history of pigmentation, total bilirubin, PCQ blood level, toe nail pigmentation, arthralgia, presence of a chief dental complaint, headache, and cheesy secretion from meibomian glands were significantly correlated with PCB blood levels.

By contrast, when an item other than PCB blood level was used as an objective variable, items which showed less than a 0.05% level of significance for PCB blood level (explanatory variable) included 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level and excessive eye discharge.

PCQ blood level as an objective variable (Table 3-3)

When PCQ blood level was used as an objective variable, tooth pigmentation, arthralgia, γ -GTP, total bilirubin, cheesy secretion from meibomian glands, general fatigue, total cholesterol, toe nail pigmentation, female gender, and oral mucosa pigmentation all showed less than a 0.05% level of significance. When 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level was excluded from the explanatory variables, past history of pigmentation, tooth pigmentation, PCB blood levels, acneform eruption, abdominal pain, pigmentation, and total cholesterol were significantly correlated with PCQ blood levels.

Discussion

When first reported, the food poisoning incident known as Yusho was considered to be caused by PCBs. However, following a number of studies, it is now considered to be

caused by complex poisoning due to dioxin-related compounds including PeCDF. [Furue *et al.*, 2005; Kuratsune *et al.*, 1996; Yamaguchi *et al.*, 2002; Imamura *et al.*, 2003]. Yusho patients are known to present with various symptoms related to skin, eyes and teeth, and have abnormal findings on physical examinations [Uenotsuchi *et al.*, 2005; Uenotsuchi *et al.*, 2005; Uenotsuchi *et al.*, 2005; Kanagawa *et al.*, 2005; Uenotsuchi *et al.*, 2005]. The severity of symptoms in patients with Yusho has gradually improved over the past 37 years. However, a number of patients still suffer from specific Yusho symptoms [Kanagawa *et al.*, 2005; Furue *et al.*, 2005; Kuratsune *et al.*, 1996]. The initial diagnostic criteria published in 1968 were mainly: 1) proven history of ingestion of contaminated rice bran oil, 2) prominent dermatological, ophthalmological and mucosal signs, and 3) several nonspecific general signs and symptoms. Hyperglyceridemia, pulmonary disorders, intractable headache, elevated blood PCB concentrations, and specific PCB patterns on gas chromatography were added to the initial diagnostic criteria in 1972 and 1976. Blood PCQ levels were added to the criteria in 1981 [Furue *et al.*, 2005]. In 2004, we finally added blood 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF levels to the present diagnostic criteria (Table 4). In this study we examined the statistical correlation of major causes (2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF and PCB/PCQ blood levels) with medical examination items collected from the annual medical checks of Yusho individuals performed from 2001 to 2004 (33 to 37 years after the occurrence of the Yusho disaster).

The results from this study show that, the levels of 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF and PCB/PCQ in blood were strongly related. This is presumably because both PeCDF and PCQs are generated from heat-denatured PCBs. These mixed chlorinated compounds would have simultaneously contaminated the rice bran oil. The blood levels of 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ tended to correlate with older age, as adult victims were considered to have eaten greater amounts of the contaminated oil compared with child victims when the

contaminated oil was available in shops in 1968. The blood levels of 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ also tended to correlate with female gender. This may be attributed to the fact that these chlorinated compounds are highly lipophilic and accumulate in adipose tissue [Furue *et al.*, 2005]. Females who have more adipose tissue may have thus accumulated more 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ.

The blood levels of 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF, PCB and PCQ also tended to correlate with acneform eruptions, black comedones, cutaneous and mucosal pigmentation, and hypersecretion of meibomian glands, in addition to general fatigue, headaches, cough/sputum, abdominal pain, increased serum γ -GTP, and decreased total bilirubin, these signs and symptoms are all included in the present diagnostic criteria of Yusho (Table 4). In addition to the symptoms listed in the diagnostic criteria, arthralgia was frequently correlated to PeCDF, PCB and PCQ blood levels.

When we analyzed 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level as an objective and explanatory variable, the PeCDF blood level was related to PCB/PCQ blood levels, increased blood glucose level, arthralgia, decreased A/G ratio, increased potassium levels, increased total cholesterol, and cutaneous manifestations. When PCB/PCQ blood levels were excluded from the explanatory variables, A/G ratio and arthralgia were still related to PeCDF blood levels. Thus, arthralgia and A/G ratio were presumably related to PeCDF blood level.

PCB blood level was related to past history of cutaneous and ophthalmological manifestations, hepatomegaly, and decreased total bilirubin. When PeCDF blood level was excluded from the explanatory variables, the ophthalmological manifestation (cheesy secretion from the meibomian glands) showed less than a 0.05% level of significance. Thus, PCB blood level was presumably strongly related to ophthalmological symptoms. The PCQ blood level was related to cutaneous, oral and ophthalmological manifestations, increased γ -GTP, and increased total cholesterol. When the PeCDF blood level was

excluded in the explanatory variables, oral pigmentation and increased total cholesterol were significantly related to PCQ blood level. The biochemical adverse effect of PCQ has been reported to include increased triacylglycerol level [Kunita *et al.*, 1982]. However, based on the results of this study, total cholesterol level, one of the markers of lipid metabolism such as triacylglycerol, was presumably related to PCQ blood level.

Cutaneous, mucosal and ophthalmological manifestations, related to the blood levels of PeCDF, PCB and PCQ in this study, were considered characteristic of Yusho and were included in the diagnostic criteria. After Yusho patients had suffered chronic exposure to these chlorinated compounds for more than 35 years, the PeCDF blood level was presumed to be related to arthralgia and decreased A/G ratio; the PCB blood level to ophthalmological symptoms; and the PCQ blood level to total cholesterol.

Conclusions

In Yusho individuals PeCDF blood level appeared related to PCQ/PCB blood levels, arthralgia and A/G ratio; PCB blood level was strongly related to ophthalmological symptoms; while PCQ blood level was related to total cholesterol.

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Glossary

1) Black comedones (other sites):

black comedones appearing on body parts other than the face, auricle, and trunk

2) Palatal findings

Palatal lesions known to occur in Yusho patients include pigmentation and parakeratosis in the gingiva, dental root dysplasia, and odontatrophia.

Palatal findings from examinations in Yusho patients are recorded as follows:

(1) The upper teeth and lower teeth are each divided into 3 sites:

site 1 = 7-4, site 2 = 3-3, and site 3 = 4-7.

(2) Pigmentation patterns are divided into the following patterns recognized in Yusho patients:

Condition 1 = diffuse, Condition 2 = punctate, Condition 3 = linear,

Condition 4 = zonal, Condition 5 = cloudy, Condition 6 = island shaped

Table 1. Annual medical check examination sheet of Yusho patients.

(1). Laboratory examination

Blood concentrations of PCB- and dioxin-related compounds

Total PCB, Peak 1, Peak 2, Peak 3, PCB pattern, CB ratio, Total PCQ, Dioxin-related compounds

Urinalysis (Protein, Sugar, Occult blood, Urobilinogen, pH)

Hematological examination

ESR (1-hour), ESR (2-hour), WBC, RBC, Hb, Ht, MCV, MCH, MCHC, PLT

Blood chemistry

T-Bil, D-Bil, GOT, GPT, TP, Alb, A/G ratio, ZTT, TTT, ALP, LAP, γ -GTP, ChE, LDH, CPK, TC,

HDL-chol, TG, β -lip, BUN, Cre, Na, K, Ca, P, Amy, blood sugar level

Immunological examination (HBs antigen, α -fetoprotein)

(2) . Interview and physical examination

Life history (Alcohol, Smoking)

Chief complaint

Past history (Before the incident, After the incident)

Subjective symptoms

General fatigue, Headache, Cough, Sputum, Abdominal pain, Diarrhea, Constipation

Numbness, Arthralgia, menstruation disorders

Physical examination

Body height, Body weight, Heart rate, Blood pressure, Nutrition, Heart sounds, Respiratory sounds, Chest radiography, ECG, Abdominal ultrasonography

Hepatomegaly, Splenomegaly, Edema, Lymphadenopathy, Tendon reflex, Sensory examination

(3) . Dermatological examination

Interview

Recent tendency to purulent skin eruptions, Recent recurrence of cystic lesions

Past history of acneform eruptions, Past history of pigmentation

Physical examination; severity and sites

Black comedones, Acneform eruptions, Scar formation, Pigmentation, Nail deformity

(4) . Dental examination

Chief complaint

Toothache, Gingival bleeding, Pus discharge, Gingival swelling, Feeling of tooth extrusion, Pigmentation

Items for oral examination (No/Yes, site)

Gingivitis, Marginal periodontitis, Retarded eruptions of permanent teeth,

Tooth pigmentation, Odontogenesis imperfecta, Abnormal occlusion, Other findings

Mucosal pigmentation (severity, site, *pattern, **color)

Upper gingivae, Lower gingivae, Rt. buccal mucosa, Lt. buccal mucosa, Palate

Upper lip, Lower lip

Teeth radiograph (No/Yes)

*Selection items for pattern (Diffuse, Spotted, Band-like, Linear, Faint, Scattered)

**Selection items for color (Black, Brownish, Dark-brownish)

(5) . Ophthalmological examination

Subjective symptoms (Abnormal discharge from the eyes)

Objective symptoms

Edema of the eyelid, Conjunctival pigmentation, Cysts of meibomian glands, Cheesy secretion from meibomian glands

Table2. Variables selected for principal components analysis

Factor	Variables	Factor score	Examination classification
1	Pigmentation of lower gingivae	0.735	Dental examination
2	Blood sugar (increase)	0.443	Laboratory examination
3	Abdominal pain	0.408	Questionnaire
4	Past history of pigmentation	0.498	Dermatological examination
5	Arthralgia	0.437	Questionnaire
6	Pigmentation of the upper lip (diffuse)	0.401	Dental examination
7	Total glycerides (increase)	0.361	Laboratory examination
8	Sputum	0.307	Questionnaire
9	Mean corpuscular volume (increase)	0.419	Laboratory examination
10	γ -GTP (increase)	0.367	Laboratory examination
11	Pigmentation of the upper lip (band-like)	0.581	Dental examination
12	A/G ratio (decrease)	-0.471	Laboratory examination
13	General fatigue	-0.327	Questionnaire
14	Pigmentation (toe nails)	0.447	Dermatological examination
15	Tooth pigmentation	0.336	Dental examination
16	Pigmentation of the palatal mucosa	0.204	Dental examination
17	Pigmentation of the right buccal mucosa (band-like)	0.339	Dental examination
18	Past history (after the incident)	0.241	Questionnaire
19	Dental chief complaint	0.389	Dental examination
20	Nail deformity	-0.272	Dermatological examination
21	Numbness	0.208	Questionnaire
22	Pigmentation (face)	0.280	Dermatological examination
23	Abnormal discharge from the eyes	-0.297	Ophthalmological examination
24	Abnormal respiratory sounds	0.295	Physical examination
25	Pigmentation (left. buccal mucosa)	0.266	Dental examination
26	Total cholesterol (increase)	0.246	Laboratory examination
27	Cough	0.192	Questionnaire
28	Past history (Before the incident)	0.246	Questionnaire
29	Acneform eruptions (other sites)	0.297	Dermatological examination
30	Mucosal pigmentation of upper gingivae (linear)	0.363	Dental examination
31	Cheesy secretion from meibomian glands	-0.260	Ophthalmological examination
32	Presence of hepatomegaly	-0.317	Questionnaire
33	Direct-bilirubin (increase)	0.225	Laboratory examination
34	Abnormal heart sounds	0.239	Questionnaire
35	potassium level	0.286	Laboratory examination
36	Acneform eruptions (trunk)	0.216	Dermatological examination
37	Pigmentation (fingernails)	0.231	Dermatological examination
38	Malocclusion	0.274	Dental examination
39	Black comedones (other sites)	-0.323	Dermatological examination
40	Urinalysis protein	0.363	Laboratory examination
41	Systolic blood pressure (low)	-0.294	Questionnaire
42	Toothache	0.311	Dental examination
43	Edema of the eyelids	0.305	Ophthalmological examination
44	Headache	0.188	Questionnaire
45	Chief complaint	-0.224	Questionnaire
46	Pigmentation of the mucosa of the upper lip (spotted)	0.292	Dental examination
47	Black comedones (face)	0.240	Dermatological examination
48	Total bilirubin (increase)	0.225	Laboratory examination
49	Past history of acneform eruptions	0.248	Dermatological examination

Table 3. Results of logistic regression analysis

3-1. 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level

List of explanatory variables which showed less than 0.10% level of significance when 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level (2 categories) and the factors selected by the principal components analysis were used as objective variables and explanatory variables, respectively

	Explanatory variables	β	Standard deviation	Wald	Significance probability		Exp (B)
1	PCB blood level	1.641	0.355	21.350	3.827E-06	**	5.159
2	PCQ blood level	8.235	1.844	19.949	7.953E-06	**	3771.361
3	Blood sugar (increase)	0.038	0.011	11.310	7.708E-04	**	1.038
4	Arthralgia	3.734	1.159	10.382	1.273E-03	**	41.857
5	Gender (female)	3.456	1.115	9.605	1.941E-03	**	31.679
6	T-bilirubin (increase)	-3.310	1.194	7.681	5.582E-03	**	0.037
7	Black comedones (face)	-2.216	0.836	7.021	8.056E-03	**	0.109
8	Past history of skin pigmentation	3.576	1.435	6.209	1.271E-02	**	35.735
9	A/G ratio (decrease)	1.978	0.825	5.748	1.651E-02	**	7.225
10	Acneform eruptions (trunk)	3.809	1.650	5.331	2.095E-02	**	45.088
11	Respiratory sounds (abnormal)	6.036	2.780	4.714	2.991E-02	**	418.145
12	Acneform eruptions (other sites)	-5.514	2.721	4.107	4.270E-02	**	0.004
13	Potassium level (increase)	-1.849	0.917	4.071	4.361E-02	**	0.157
14	Past history of acneform eruptions	-2.630	1.304	4.065	4.378E-02	**	0.072
15	Total cholesterol (increase)	-0.023	0.011	3.910	4.799E-02	**	0.978
16	Heart sound (abnormal)	13.341	7.892	2.857	9.096E-02	*	621883.792

List of explanatory variables which showed less than 0.10% level of significance when PCB/PCQ blood levels were excluded from the explanatory variables in the above analysis

1	Past history of pigmentation	1.719	0.445	14.943	0.000	**	5.582
2	Age (old)	0.053	0.014	13.637	0.000	**	1.055
3	A/G ratio (decrease)	0.723	0.336	4.646	0.031	**	2.061
4	General fatigue	-0.652	0.304	4.593	0.032	**	0.521
5	Arthralgia	0.633	0.299	4.478	0.034	**	1.884
6	Gender (female)	0.615	0.334	3.390	0.066	*	1.850
7	Pigmentation of the right buccal mucosa (band-like)	2.596	1.422	3.332	0.068	*	13.416

3-2. PCB blood level

Explanatory variables that showed less than 0.10% level of significance when the PCB blood level (2 categories) and factors selected by the principal components analysis were used as objective variables and explanatory variables, respectively

	Explanatory variables	β	Standard deviation	Wald	Significance probability		Exp (B)
1	2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level	0.012	0.003	15.412	8.65E-05	**	1.01E+00
2	Sputum	-2.818	0.855	10.876	9.74E-04	**	5.97E-02
3	Age (old)	0.129	0.039	10.834	9.96E-04	**	1.14E+00
4	Past history of pigmentation	-3.832	1.167	10.783	1.02E-03	**	2.17E-02
5	Gender (female)	-1.986	0.693	8.220	4.14E-03	**	1.37E-01
6	Past history of acneform eruptions	2.785	1.023	7.409	6.49E-03	**	1.62E+01
7	Pigmentation (toe nails)	-1.907	0.750	6.472	1.10E-02	**	1.49E-01
8	Hepatomegaly	-7.627	3.134	5.920	1.50E-02	**	4.87E-04
9	Headache	-1.554	0.704	4.871	2.73E-02	**	2.11E-01
10	Cheesy secretion from meibomian glands	2.623	1.248	4.414	3.56E-02	**	1.38E+01
11	Total bilirubin (increase)	-1.611	0.770	4.372	3.65E-02	**	2.00E-01
12	General fatigue	1.374	0.676	4.138	4.19E-02	**	3.95E+00

Explanatory variables which showed less than 0.10% level of significance when 2,3,4,7, 8-PeCDF blood level was excluded from the explanatory variables in the above analysis

1	Age (old)	0.115	0.033	11.920	0.001	**	1.121
2	Sputum	-2.040	0.663	9.473	0.002	**	0.130
3	Past history of pigmentation	-2.432	0.958	6.440	0.011	**	0.088
4	Total bilirubin (decrease)	-1.701	0.686	6.145	0.013	**	0.182
5	PCQ blood level	1.142	0.480	5.654	0.017	**	3.134
6	Pigmentation (toe nails)	-1.418	0.621	5.213	0.022	**	0.242
7	Arthralgia	-4.886	2.357	4.299	0.038	**	0.008
8	Presence of a chief dental complaint	1.544	0.748	4.263	0.039	**	4.682
9	Headache	-1.276	0.624	4.179	0.041	**	0.279
10	Cheesy secretion from meibomian glands	2.616	1.291	4.110	0.043	**	13.682
11	Past history of acneform eruptions	1.650	0.853	3.743	0.053	*	5.205
12	Black comedones	-3.569	2.086	2.926	0.087	*	0.028
13	Mean corpuscular volume (increase)	-0.080	0.047	2.847	0.092	*	0.923
14	Urinalysis protein (increase)	-0.619	0.372	2.771	0.096	*	0.539

3-3. PCQ blood level

Explanatory variables which showed less than 0.10% level of significance when PCQ blood level (2 categories) and the factors selected by the principal components analysis were used as objective variables and explanatory variables, respectively.

	Explanatory variables	β	Standard deviation	Wald	Significance probability	Exp (B)
1	2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level	0.040	0.010	16.276	5.476E-05 **	1.041E+00
2	Tooth pigmentation	6.737	2.073	10.564	1.153E-03 **	8.433E+02
3	Arthralgia	-3.082	1.138	7.337	6.754E-03 **	4.585E-02
4	γ -GTP (increase)	-0.065	0.024	7.132	7.570E-03 **	9.370E-01
5	Total bilirubin (decrease)	3.282	1.384	5.626	1.769E-02 **	2.662E+01
6	Cheesy secretion from meibomian glands	-7.612	3.230	5.554	1.844E-02 **	4.946E-04
7	General fatigue	2.983	1.273	5.497	1.905E-02 **	1.976E+01
8	Total cholesterol (increase)	0.042	0.018	5.260	2.182E-02 **	1.043E+00
9	Pigmentation (toe nails)	-3.974	1.906	4.348	3.705E-02 **	1.879E-02
10	Gender (female)	-2.227	1.111	4.015	4.509E-02 **	1.079E-01
11	Pigmentation of the right buccal mucosa (band-like)	-7.584	3.846	3.889	4.860E-02 **	5.083E-04
12	Acneform eruptions (other sites)	8.124	4.436	3.354	6.705E-02 *	3.373E+03
13	Headache	-1.901	1.116	2.903	8.842E-02 *	1.494E-01

Explanatory variables which showed less than 0.10% level of significance when 2,3,4,7,8-PeCDF blood level was excluded from the explanatory variables in the above analysis

1	Past history of pigmentation	3.117	0.989	9.932	0.002 **	22.588
2	Tooth pigmentation	3.929	1.260	9.727	0.002 **	50.869
3	PCB blood level	0.437	0.156	7.842	0.005 **	1.547
4	Acneform eruptions (trunk)	-3.260	1.297	6.318	0.012 **	0.038
5	Abdominal pain	-1.779	0.781	5.184	0.023 **	0.169
6	Pigmentation (face)	4.678	2.105	4.937	0.026 **	107.516
7	Total cholesterol (increase)	0.021	0.010	4.310	0.038 **	1.021
8	Acneform eruptions (other sites)	3.613	2.003	3.252	0.071 *	37.059
9	Pigmentation of the upper lip (patchy)	3.161	1.830	2.984	0.084 *	23.590
10	γ -GTP (increase)	-0.021	0.013	2.721	0.099 *	0.980

Table 4 Diagnostic criteria for Yusho (as presently supplemented)

The diagnostic criteria for Yusho were revised on October 26, 1972; supplemented on June 14, 1976; and an item related to blood polychlorinated quarterphenyl (PCQ) level was added on June 16, 1981. The study group of Yusho started to measure blood levels of dioxins in annual medical check-ups from 2001. It was considered appropriate to add an item corresponding to the blood 2,3,4,7,8-penta-chlorodibenzofurans (PeCDF) level; therefore the criteria were supplemented and further revised on September 29, 2004.

Conditions of onset

- 1) Ingestion of Kanemi rice bran oil contaminated with PCBs,
- 2) Vertical PCB transmission from mothers with Yusho to infants in some cases,
- 3) Familial occurrence seen in many cases

Important manifestations

1. Acneform eruptions

Black comedones seen on the face, buttocks and other intertriginous sites; comedones with inflammatory manifestations; and subcutaneous cysts with atheroma-like contents that tended to suppurate.;

2. Pigmentation

Pigmentation of the face, palpebral conjunctivae, gingivae, and nails etc. (including so-called 'black babies');

3. Hypersecretion of the meibomian glands;

4. Unusual composition and concentration of PCBs in the blood;

5. Abnormal level of blood PCQ

- 1) ≥ 0.1 ppb: an abnormally high concentration,
- 2) 0.03 to 0.09 ppb: the boundary between high and normal concentrations,
- 3) ≤ 0.02 ppb (detection limit): normal concentration;

6. Abnormal level of blood PeCDF

- 1) ≥ 50 pg/g lipids: an abnormally high concentration,
- 2) 30 to 50 pg/g lipids: a relatively high concentration,
- 3) < 30 pg/g lipids: normal concentration]

Standard symptoms and findings

1. Subjective symptoms

- 1) General fatigue,
- 2) Headaches, dull headaches,
- 3) Paresthesia of the extremities (abnormal sensation),
- 4) Increased eye discharge,
- 5) Cough and sputum,
- 6) Constant abdominal pain,
- 7) Altered menstruation

2. Objective findings

- 1) Manifestation of bronchitis,
- 2) Deformation of nails,
- 3) Bursitis,
- 4) Increased neutral fat in the serum,
- 5) Increased serum γ -glutamyl transpeptidase (γ -GTP),
- 6) Decrease in serum bilirubin,
- 7) Small-for-date baby,
- 8) Growth retardation and dental abnormality (retarded eruption of permanent teeth)