

Responses to reviewers' comments:

R. Herrick's Major Compulsory Revisions :

1. Removed "California population mortality rates" text from the Abstract since the results of that analysis were not presented in the manuscript.
2. Added language in the Abstract (p. 3) and later in the manuscript (p. 14) that no conclusions are made about associations with particular agents.
3. Expanded the discussion about exposures (p. 5) to include metals and electromagnetic radiation (including ionizing radiation) and added the Burgess book as a reference (ref. #11) for the discussion.
4. Referenced the paragraph (p. 5) on types of cancer expected from the literature and added Siemiatycki, et al. (ref. # 11) to the other references cited.
5. Added discussion (on p. 8 and p. 15) about the missing data on work history and the lack of any systematic pattern (i.e., apparent randomness) that would introduce bias in the effect estimate.
6. Removed California (p. 9), as in #1.
7. Revised the sub-group list and noted that these data are not shown. The individual plant location analyses were done because they were of interest in the litigation and they are similar to the "manufacturing 30 days or more" analyses presented in the manuscript.
8. On examining Table 1, which describes the decedents with work history data available, it seems that the most complete data were in the years 1985-89 (not "the most recent time period") and that the percentages fell off both before and after that time period in males and females. This does not comport with the reviewer's comment and is not considered a possible limitation of the study.
9. Here again, the text was changed to make it clear that no information about particular agents was available and therefore no conclusions can be made about such associations.
10. The reference (on the former p. 14) to CA and MN locations was removed.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. A little more information about the UK and Taiwanese studies was added (p. 4).

R. Park's Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The text now refers to the overlap between this analysis and the Beall, et al. analysis, although it is not possible to determine exactly how much (it is not 31,900 vs 6,500). Beall, et al. limit their analysis to three plants, but there are decedents from other manufacturing plants (such as Rochester, MN) and other plants where typewriters and electronic components were made (such as Endicott, NY) as well as non-manufacturing locations included in this manuscript. The company name IBM was added to the text (p. 6) and is in the list of abbreviations.
2. The reference number was corrected and additional references were added.
3. The confidence intervals are Poisson-based, which was added to the text (p. 9).
4. The text (p. 15) was changed so that it refers to "mortality studies," not proportional mortality ratio studies, to make it clear that the limitations have nothing to do with the PMR method.
5. The figure showing the congruence between this analysis and the Beall, et al. study is now referred to in the text (p. 13).

Discretionary Revisions:

1. Table 3 was eliminated, and the text was reduced.
2. The PMRs for pancreas, kidney, breast, brain and central nervous system and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma were added to the PMR tables.

A. Watterson's comments:
No revisions were required.