

Ritter, L et al., Report of a Panel on the Relationship between Public Exposure to Pesticides and Cancer, for the Ad Hoc Panel on Pesticides and Cancer, National Cancer Institute of Canada, Cancer, 80(10):2019-33, 1997

Abstract:

Background: Pesticides, which by their nature are biologically active compounds, continue to raise public concern regarding their possible role as important etiologic agents in the development of human cancer.

Methods: To examine this potential role, the National Cancer Institute of Canada convened an Ad Hoc Panel on Pesticides and Cancer to examine the possible contribution of pesticide exposure, particularly in the general population, to the development of human cancer.

Results: The Panel focused primarily on exposure in the general population and reviewed a range of studies that addressed issues related to dietary exposure as well as incidental home and garden uses. In addition, the Panel examined the regulatory framework that exists to safeguard the public from potentially carcinogenic pesticides and also reviewed some potential benefits of pesticide use, including the availability of an abundant and low cost supply of fresh fruits and vegetables as an important strategy in the overall mitigation of cancer risk.

Conclusions: The Panel concluded that it was not aware of any definitive evidence to suggest that synthetic pesticides contribute significantly to overall cancer mortality. The Panel also concluded that it did not believe that any increased intake of pesticide residues associated with increased intake of fruits and vegetables poses any increased risk of cancer. The Panel further concluded, among other things, that tobacco use continues to be the most important preventable cause of cancer and premature mortality and thus is an appropriate focus for cancer control strategy.