

Large study identifies risk factors for multiple myeloma

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Multiple myeloma is a type of leukaemia which affects B lymphocytes. There have been some indications that exposure to pesticides or chlorinated solvents increases the risk of developing this cancer. New research published in Biomed Central's open access journal *Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology* provides a large (from 22 centres across Europe), matched control study into lifetime risk of multiple myeloma. They find that risk of Multiple myeloma is related to farm work, printing and cleaning. But although exposure to pesticides seemed to be a risk, exposure to organic solvents was not.

The EPILYMPH study was set up to investigate risk of [multiple myeloma](#) with level of education, smoking, [body mass index](#), lifetime occupational history, and occupational exposure to previously suggested potential risks including chemicals, live animals, dust, contact with meat, working with children, and ionizing radiation. Recruitment into the study was conducted at 22 centres in six European countries starting in 1998 and ending in 2004. This large study included 277 multiple myeloma cases, each with four controls, matched by age and gender.

The occupational groups with an increased risk were farmers, cleaning workers, telephone and radio operators. There was some indication that print workers and gardeners were also at increased risk, although the number of cases were too small for this to be statistically significant. Risk for both farmers and printers continued to increased with duration of occupation (for more than 10 years 'on the job').

More information: Multiple Myeloma and lifetime occupation: results from the EPILYMPH study Carla Perrotta, Anthony Staines, Mary Codd, Silke Kleefeld, Dominique Crowley, Andrea t'Mannetje, Nicholas Becker, Paul Brennan, Silvia Sanjosé, Lenka Foretova, Marck Maynadié, Alexandra Nieters, Paolo Boffetta and Pierluggi Cocco
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