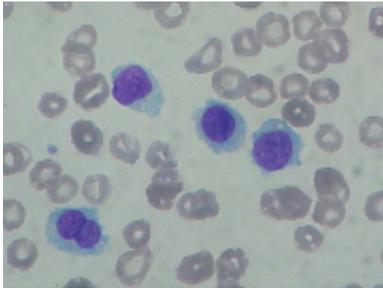


# Nuclear power plants do not raise risk of leukaemia in children

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Young children who live near nuclear power plants do not have a greater risk of developing childhood leukaemia or non-Hodgkin Lymphoma according to research published in the *British Journal of Cancer* today (Friday).

Researchers from the Childhood Cancer Research Group in Oxford conducted a study of almost 10,000 children under five years of age who were diagnosed with leukaemia or similar cancers in Britain between 1962 and 2007. The scientists measured the distance from the nearest [nuclear power](#) plant both at birth and when diagnosed with [childhood leukaemia](#) or non-Hodgkin [lymphoma](#), and found that there was no apparent extra risk living near a [nuclear power plant](#).

Importantly, the cases of [childhood cancer](#) were drawn from the

National Registry of Childhood Tumours, which has kept records of nearly all children diagnosed since 1962 with linked registrations to birth records for children born in Britain.

Dr John Bithell, honorary research fellow at the Childhood Cancer Research Group and lead author on the study, said: "The incidence of childhood leukaemia near nuclear installations in Great Britain has been a concern ever since the 1980s when an excess of cancer in young people near Sellafield was reported in a television programme.

"Since then, there have been conflicting reports in the UK and Europe as to whether there is an increased incidence of childhood cancer near nuclear power plants. Our case-control study has considered the birth records for nearly every case of childhood leukaemia born in Britain and, reassuringly, has found no such correlation with proximity to nuclear power plants."

Overall, leukaemia is the twelfth most common cancer in the UK, but accounts for a third of all cancers diagnosed in children. Around 500 new cases of leukaemia were diagnosed in children under the age of 15 in 2010 in the UK.

Hazel Nunn, Cancer Research UK's head of health information, said: "It's heartening that this study supports the findings of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE), that being born or living near a nuclear power station doesn't lead to more cases of leukaemia and similar cancers in children under five in the UK. But these results can't rule out any possible risk, so it's still important that we continue to monitor both radiation levels near nuclear power plants and rates of cancer among people who live close by."

**More information:** Bithell J. F. et al. Leukaemia in young children in the vicinity of British nuclear power plants: a case-control study, *British*

*Journal of Cancer*, 2013. [DOI: 10.1038/bjc.2013.560](https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.2013.560)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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