LETTER

Response to the Comments of González

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No reputable scientist would question the link between reduced tobacco use and subsequent reductions in cancer of the lung and bronchus. The same objectivity should be applied to our study.

González’ belief that relatively low-dose exposures have no health risk is contradicted by decades of history since 1945 and the many reports cited in our article. These include Alice Stewart’s work with pelvic X-rays to pregnant women; the National Academy of Sciences report on atom bomb test fallout; the U.S. Department of Energy report on occupational exposures at nuclear weapons plants; and 19 peer-reviewed articles showing elevated child cancer rates near various nuclear facilities. In 2005, the blue ribbon Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR VII) concluded that “the frequency of cancers and hereditary genetic effects increase with low-level radiation as a linear non-threshold (our italics) function of the dose.”

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission believes the issue of cancer rates near nuclear power plants merit analysis. The Commission has selected the National Academy of Sciences to analyze cancer patterns near U.S. nuclear plants.

Gonzalez states that reports on low-dose radiation exposure have “caused serious psychological harm to people.” Again, no empirical evidence to support such a claim exists, and multiple studies of plant and animal life near sites that received fallout from Chernobyl and Fukushima contradict the accusation. Like any research on etiology, our work is conducted to further understand possible links between known hazards and disease.

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