

Press Explanatory Session

"Risk of Death among Children of Atomic Bomb Survivors after 62 years of Follow-up: A Cohort Study"

Interest among the public has always been high in the Radiation Effects Research Foundation (RERF)'s findings regarding morbidity and mortality in the children of directly exposed atomic bomb survivors, in particular among members of the media.

With that in mind, on October 5, 2015, RERF convened an explanatory session for the media concerning a paper recently published online in London-based *The Lancet Oncology*. The paper, "Risk of Death among Children of Atomic Bomb Survivors after 62 years of Follow-up: A Cohort Study," reported the latest results from RERF's long-term study of atomic bomb radiation effects in the offspring of atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The media session was held at Hiroshima RERF and connected to Nagasaki RERF by teleconferencing. Attending media members in both cities totaled around 15 representatives of major news publications and broadcasters, including local news organizations from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as national media. Several of their reports describing what was reported at the meeting were broadcast and published in the following days.

Dr. Kotaro Ozasa, Chief, Department of Epidemiology, opened the session with a general explanation of the study's findings and significance (please see the Science Articles piece of the same title in this Update on page 21).

Dr. Eric J. Grant, Assistant Chief, Department

of Epidemiology, responded to the questions following the brief description, explaining the technical details and nuances of the study as its lead author. Diverse questions from the media included those regarding what level of hazard ratio represents statistical significance, as well as why genetic effects in the offspring generation have not been seen in humans despite such effects being apparent in many other species.

Given intense interest expressed by the media, the entire session went considerably longer than usual.

The study's 75,327 participants were born between 1946 and 1984, being conceived after the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and followed up until December 31, 2009. The study, which was the latest in a series of RERF research into the same topic, showed no increased mortality from cancer or non-cancer diseases with larger parental exposure in children of atomic bomb survivors. Thus, children of people exposed to the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki have so far had no indications of deleterious health effects even after 62 years.

Dr. Grant was careful to point out to the media, however, that such epidemiological studies must be complemented by sensitive molecular techniques in the future to fully understand the overall effects of preconception exposure to ionizing radiation in human beings.



Press explanatory session held for paper "Risk of Death among Children of Atomic Bomb Survivors after 62 years of Follow-up: A Cohort Study"