

Have thousands of persons unnecessarily been sacrificed since 1955?

Translated by Ö Hallberg from:

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Increased sun exposure and increased smoking respectively according to medical science primarily cause skin cancer and lung cancer. However, distinct time relations point at a third common cause that so far has not been recognized. Which one?

From year 1955 the FM-radio (88-108 MHz) started to become everyone's radio channel in Sweden. Since 1955 incidence and mortality have increased strongly. The incidence of breast-, bladder- and prostate cancer has also increased while the mortality has been kept reasonably constant over time. Asthma is another public disease, that out broke clearly around 1960. Socialstyrelsen reports in "Cancer i siffror" (2) that the cause of breast- and prostate cancer is unknown, but hormone related factors are considered to be important. Bladder cancer is considered to relate to tobacco smoking. The skin cancer explosion, starting in 1955, is said to be caused by changed sun bathing habits. Cancerfonden states that "The Skin cancer type Malignant Melanoma is one of the cancer forms that is increasing fastest both among men and women in Sweden" (3). From 1912 to 1954 the number of skin cancer deaths increased by in average 0,5 cases per year, i.e. from 30 to 55/year. From 1955 to 1998 the average increase was whole 7 deaths per year, or 14 times larger than before 1955, that is from 55 deaths/year to 325/year (Statistiska Centralbyrån. Death causes, annual report 1912-1998). If the tourist charter travels to the south really did cause this catastrophe it would have been reasonable to charge a sun tax on every travel if the business case should be positive from a society point? Cancerfonden in Sweden answers the question about why the cancer rate is increasing by stating: "The absolute predominant cause is that we are getting older. This is a trend that basically is positive and means that the life length has increased a lot in Sweden." (3).

A closer look at official statistics indicates remarkable correlations. The mentioned cancer forms are linked to each other. Countries having high mortality in skin cancer have also high mortality in the other cancers. This is often explained in sweeping terms like "western life style". The same connection is noticed also within Sweden when we compare the mortality in our different counties (4). The "western life style" thus is supposed to differ between different counties in Sweden!

Especially remarkable is to note that skin cancer seems to be related to lung cancer and colon cancer. Swedish counties with high mortality in skin cancer also have a trend of higher mortalities in these diseases (a spread is of course noticed). For lung cancer this means that it is not only smoking that is behind the epidemic but also another environmental factor that at the same time accelerates skin cancer. You can also see a connection between skin cancer and colon cancer in different countries. Another remarkable observation is that there is no statistical correlation what so ever between skin cancer and leukemia within Sweden or between different countries (4). The earlier mentioned connections between different cancer forms do not apply to all cancer forms.

Despite the fact that these obvious correlations have been reported ever since 1955 it seems as no research has started in order to identify the common denominator. Instead, all resources are devoted to develop new treatment methods and new, profitable medicines for an ever-growing market. Cancerfonden in Sweden sponsors now 423 research projects and 20 planning groups. Among those there is at present not a single project that specifically targets to find the cause to the increasing incidence- and mortality numbers. It is worth noticing, though, that another foundation, the Swedish Cancer and Allergy foundation headed in Stockholm, has as an explicit goal to sponsor research about different environmental factors and their relation to cancer. Despite great difficulties the co-workers of Cancer- and Allergy Foundation struggles on along this road. This is to their honor!

The increased skin cancer incidence has caused more than 6000 deaths above earlier trends since 1955 excluding deaths in other cancer forms, and very large costs for the society.

Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB) has every year published a report called "Dödsorsaker" (death causes), annually reported 1912-1998. This publication is addressed: "Till Konungen" (To the King) which means the government. But what did the government do in 1955? And what is the government doing today? We recently asked Socialdepartementet about what decisions were taken when the drastically increased mortality in skin cancer was apparent at the end of the 50th. So far, no answer has been given (Later, 2001-02-20 we got an answer where we were referred to Socialstyrelsen).

During these more than 45 years the responsible authorities have failed in pinpointing and acting on the problem. Therefore we believe that other and more result oriented methods need to be used. If e.g. a problem is noticed in a manufacturing industry it is mandatory to immediately identify the cause and to take corrective actions. There are books written for those who want to know more about problem solving in a constructive way.

You start by addressing a few questions: When did the problem start? What happened then? Has the same problem been observed in other factories manufacturing the same detail? If not, what is the difference between the factories? Maybe there is at the end a small difference in the manufactured parts? Is there a similar product that reasonably should have the same problem but actually does not? What is the difference between these products? Etc, etc.

By carrying out a similar analysis regarding the above mentioned cancer forms it would be possible to identify a possible main cause and to propose concrete and likely efficient counter measures quite soon.

But in this case almost 50 years have passed without any serious attempt to find the cause to this problem. We therefore propose that a national research project start to specifically address the task of giving an explanation to the current cancer epidemic. One piece of that puzzle seems to be: 1955.

References

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4. Socialstyrelsen, Hur mår Sverige? <http://www.sos.se/epc/hms/hms2.htm> (21.3.2001).