Analysis of cancers associated with radiation in the area around Dalgety Bay, 2008-2017

An update for the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the environment (COMARE)

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Information Services Division describes the occurrence of cancers diagnosed between 2008 and 2017 in the population of the area around Dalgety Bay. It has been published following a request from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE). The request was to provide an update to the data reported in the 15th COMARE report as part of regular monitoring following the discovery of a series of radioactive objects found in the Dalgety Bay area since 1990.

Main Points

- No significant increase was found in overall risk of cancer in Dalgety Bay compared with the rest of Scotland between 2008 and 2017.

- No significant increased risk was found of any single group of cancers, including those for which there is stronger research evidence that radiation is a causal factor.
Background

Increased radioactivity levels have been found around Dalgety Bay, Fife, since at least 1990. In 2011, more radioactivity was found in particular locations. This increase is likely to be the result of scrapping luminous aircraft instruments that contained Radium-226, after the Second World War.

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE) has led investigations of this radioactivity and ISD provided information on cancer occurrence. While there was no overall increase in cancer risk found between 1975 and 2009, COMARE recommended in 2014 that ISD should repeat its analysis of cancer incidence in the area in the future. This report comprises the update of our previous analysis of cancer incidence in the area around Dalgety Bay.

ISD will repeat analysis of cancer incidence in and around the Dalgety Bay area in the future on the advice of COMARE.

Contact

Dr David Morrison
Director
Scottish Cancer Registry
0131 275 6087
Email: nss.isdCANCERSTATS@nhs.net

Catherine Thomson
Service Manager
Population Health
0131 275 7198

1 COMARE (2014). Fifteenth Report. Radium contamination in the area around Dalgety Bay. PHE. Accessed 22/05/2018

Further Information

ISD publish a wide range of cancer statistics. You can find all our cancer information on our website https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/. Further information can be found in the full report Analysis of cancers associated with radiation - Dalgety Bay (2008-2017).

The next release of this publication will be determined by COMARE, but it is anticipated to be no earlier than 2024.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.