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HEPATIC ANGIOSARCOMA IN SOUTH GLAMORGAN: A RARE TUMOUR STILL APPEARING 40 YEARS AFTER OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE

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Introduction Hepatic angiosarcoma is a rare condition with a poor prognosis and an incidence ranging from 0.14 to 0.25 per million¹ however it occurs more commonly in certain geographical areas. These centre on petrochemical processing plants which were involved in the polymerisation of vinyl chloride to make PVC. Workers acting as 'polycleaners' in the vats were particularly susceptible. Changes were made to the processing schedule and cleaning regimes in 1974, however the authors are continuing to see cases some four decades after occupational exposure. Hepatic angiosarcoma is an industrial disease therefore all deaths have to be reported to the coroner.

Our hospital is close to a petrochemical processing plant in Barry, South Glamorgan and following a recent admission of a man with associated liver failure the authors reviewed the number of cases of hepatic angiosarcoma during the last 15 years in the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan area to assess whether or not this was an isolated case.

Methods The authors identified all cases of hepatic angiosarcoma in the Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan area in the last 15 years via a computer database search of records with the assistance of the coroner.

Results Seven cases of angiosarcoma were identified as outlined in the table 1 below, six of whom had definite exposure to vinyl chloride via the petrochemicals industry, the other was uncertain.

Conclusion Cases of hepatic angiosarcoma related to the petrochemical industry are still occurring and it is important that Gastroenterologists are aware of the continuing presentation of new cases despite changes in safety protocols at petrochemical plants over 35 years ago. This delayed presentation suggests a long latent period between exposure and diagnosis. Occupational history is key to the diagnosis along with a

Table 1 PTH-124

Age	Sex	Date of death	Cause of death on death certificate	Exposure	Postmortem verdict
79	Male	March 1996	Fractured cervical spine, but haemangiosarcoma of liver in part 2	Unknown	Accidental death
66	Male	November 2000	Hepatic angiosarcoma	Process supervisor	Signed up as a natural cause after PM
81	Male	May 2003	Hepatic angiosarcoma	Chemicals processor	Industrial disease
61	Male	July 2003	Angiosarcoma of liver	Exposed to vinyl chloride monomer	Industrial disease
59	Male	May 2004	Hepatic angiosarcoma	Exposed to vinyl chloride monomer	Industrial disease
77	Male	October 2009	Ruptured hepatic angiosarcoma	Chemicals cleaner	Industrial disease
81	Male	August 2010	Angiosarcoma of liver	Chemicals cleaner	Industrial disease

typical radiological appearance as biopsy has a high incidence of significant haemorrhage.²

Competing interests None.

Keywords hepatic angiosarcoma.

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