

PRESENT STATE OF THE MONITORING FOR INTERNAL CONTAMINATION
AT TOKAI RESEARCH ESTABLISHMENT, JAPAN ATOMIC ENERGY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Jun Akaishi, Hiroshi Fukuda and Seiichi Mizushita

Bioassay Section, Division of Health Physics, Japan Atomic
Energy Research Institute, Tokai, Ibaraki, Japan

The Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI) was established in 1956. Activities at Tokai Research Establishment (Tokai R.E., JAERI) were started in 1958. Research and development of bioassay and whole body counting was started in 1958 and 1959, respectively. As for the internal monitoring, preliminary monitoring by bioassay and whole body counting were started in 1961, and routine monitoring were started in 1964. In 1967, research activities at Oarai Research Establishment (Oarai R.E., JAERI; not so far from Tokai R.E.) were started, and routine monitoring have been carried out from this year.

At present, Tokai and Oarai R.Es. have about 2,000 and 500 employees, respectively. Among these employees, the number of workers who are registered as a occupational radiation worker are about 2,000 (Fig. 1). Main facilities at both Tokai and Oarai R.Es. are; 5 research and testing reactors, 4 accelerators, 3 high level hot laboratories, radioisotope production plant, 2 radioactive wastes treatment plants and many other hot laboratories.

The Bioassay Section, Tokai R.E. is responsible for the monitoring of the internal contamination for both Tokai and Oarai R.Es. The Bioassay Section has three groups as shown below:

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Bioassay Sec. Chief, 1 | { | Bioassay Group; 2 stuffs and 1 technician, |
| Secretary, 1 | | External Counting Group; 3 stuffs, |
| | | R&D Group; 3 stuffs |

Main equipments and facilities belong to the Section are; 160 m² of chemical laboratory (Bioassay Group), 90 m² of laboratory equipped with a heavy shield (20 cm Fe + 5 mm Pb) whole body counter and chair type counter, and 125 m² of experimental rooms (R&D Group).

LEGAL LIMIT AND AUTHORIZED DOSE LIMIT OF JAERI

Japanese legal limit and authorized limit of JAERI is presented in Table 1. These limits are applied for both external and internal exposures. Legal limit is based on ICRP Recommendation: 1962 (Pub. 6). If the exposure dose exceeds the authorized limit (JAERI), then restriction of radiation work and medical care should be taken based on JAERI's manual on radiation safety.

Table 1. Dose limits applied in JAERI

| Organ | Legal limit | Authorized limit(JAERI) |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Whole body | 3rem/3 months | 3rem/3 months and 5rem/year |
| Skin | 8rem/3 months | 8rem/3 months and 30rem/year |
| Hand, Foot | 20rem/3 months | 20rem/3 months and 75rem/year |
| Bone, Thyroid | ———— | 8rem/3 months and 30rem/year |
| Other single organ | ———— | 4rem/3 months and 15rem/year |

MONITORING OF INTERNAL CONTAMINATION

In JAERI, as to the exposure level, there are no workers who might exceeds 3/10 of the anual dose limit, and also as to the kinds of work, we have no radiation work such as described in ICRP Pub.12, Para.105. Therefore, the internal monitoring is not required routinely related to ICRP Recommendation. Internal monitoring is also not absolutely required by Japanese legal regulation, however it is required by JAERI's manual on radiation safety.

Two kinds of monitorings, that is, a Routine Monitoring and a Special Monitoring are carried out. The main purpose of the routine monitoring is to check a presence of significant contamination for the selected workers who are engaging an ordinary(routine) radiation work. The purpose of the special monitoring is to estimate of body burden, and committed dose equivalent, if necessary. Special monitoring is applied in the following cases for all of the workers who are suspicious for internal contamination; (1) a significant contamination is found by the routine monitoring, (2) an accidental contamination is occured, (3) after the work which internal contamination is suspicious.

As for the routine monitoring, methods of the monitoring are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Method of routine monitoring

| Method | Subject |
|--|---|
| External counting | |
| Whole body counting (Chair type counter) | Workers who are treating γ -emitters (>100 KeV) |
| Chest counting (Lung monitor) | Workers who are treating $\gamma(x)$ emitters (<100 KeV) |
| Bioassay | |
| Gross α activity (Radiochemically) | Workers who are treating soluble α -emitters |
| Gross β activity (Radiochemically) | Workers who are treating β -emitters (Except low β -energy nuclides) |
| Uranium | Workers who are treating uranium |
| Tritium(Liquid scintillation counting) | Workers who are treating tritium and low energy β -nuclides |

As for the special monitoring, various methods are used according to the contaminated nuclides, a heavy shield whole body counter is generally used when the external counting is applied.

FREQUENCY OF ROUTINE MONITORING AND LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANT CONTAMINATION

As a basic principle, we adopt the "investigation level" or "derived investigation level" defined by ICRP. However, regardless of internal contamination level, if the observed value exceeds the detection limit, then the fact is informed to Radiation Control Office. This information will be contribute to improvement of the working conditions. Thus, at present, we are taking the detection limit as the significant contamination level.

TABLE 3. Frequency of routine monitoring and detection limit

| Kind of monitoring | | Frequency | Detection limit* |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| External counting | WBC(Chair type) | Every 3 months | ~17nCi(¹³⁷ Cs, whole body) |
| | Chest counter | Once a year | 10-15nCi(²³⁹ Pu, lung) |
| Bioassay | Gross α activity | Twice a year | ~0.2pCi/l (²³⁹ Pu, urine) |
| | Gross β activity | Every 3 months | ~10pCi/l (⁹⁰ Sr, urine) |
| | Uranium | Every 3 months | ~5 μ g/l (nat.U, urine) |
| | Tritium | Every 3 months | ~50nCi/l(³ H, urine) |

*Detection limit: The value of mean+3 σ obtained from non radiation workers.

In the routine bioassay, only urine is taken as a sample, but in the special monitoring, both urine and feces are taken as sample.

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS FOR ROUTINE MONITORING

As provided by the JAERI's manual on radiation safety, the subjects for routine monitoring are selected by the chief of each working group(Section or Laboratory), and a request for routine monitoring is presented to Bioassay Section. However, to hold the same views about the selection of subjects is very difficult because there are nearly 100 working group in JAERI. Therefore, the following procedures are taken as a practice.

1. Bioassay Section; Survey the working condition: a questionnaire about the working condition is send to each working group.
2. Working Group; Fill up the questionnaire for each worker.
3. Bioassay Section; Investigate the results of the survey, discuss with Radiation Control Office, and make an original plan about the number of subjects for each working group.
4. Bioassay Section; Present the original plan about the number of subjects to each working

group, revise the number is made if necessary.

5. Working Group; Select the subjects according to the plan. Request of routine monitoring is send to Bioassay Section.

Main items of the questionnaire are; kind of nuclides, amounts, chemical form, degree of air contamination due to the work, ways and means for protection from the air contamination.

RESULTS OF INTERNAL MONITORING

The number of subjects of routine monitoring after 1969 are presented in figure 1. By routine monitoring, the significant internal contamination is sometimes found for the worker who are treating tritium, but it is almost never found for the other workers.

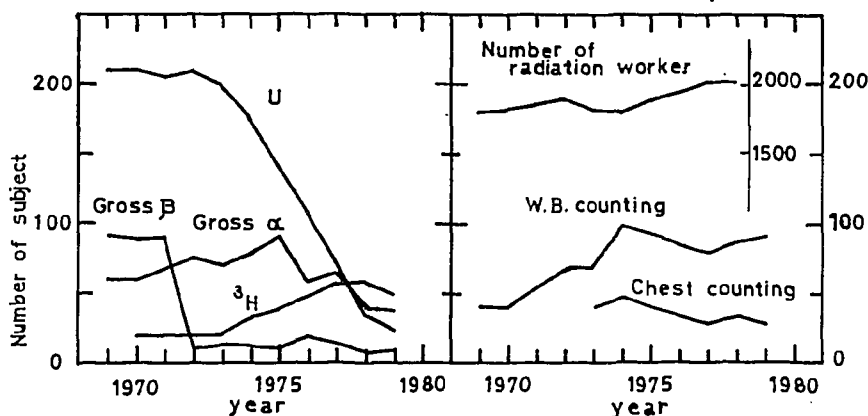


Figure 1. Numbers of subjects of routine monitoring

As for the special monitoring, a number of subjects are largely varied depended on the activities in JAERI. In 1965, the number of subjects who received the special monitoring reached to nearly 300 because a repaire of research reactor was carried out in this year. In the recent few years, the number of the subjects for special monitoring is several tens or so.

As for the special monitoring, the workers who found the significant internal contamination are less than 50%. Moreover, the internal dose (50 years) estimated are mrem order for the most of all subjects. During past 15 years, only a several cases of exposure of rem order were found. The highest dose we had experienced was about 4 rems (^{131}I , thyroid).

RECORDING LEVEL

As regards to a formal recording level, we adopt 10 mrem (usually 50 years dose). When the estimated dose is less than this level, the value is treated as zero.