

Post nuclear crisis: what about the mucocutaneous problem?

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Dear Editor,

Health problems after a nuclear crisis are an interesting issue in medicine. After the recent Japanese nuclear crisis, several health issues underwent monitoring. There are few considerations on mucocutaneous diseases. Indeed, there is no doubt that the skin and mucocutaneous issues are the main organs affected by leaked radiations. It is important to take care of mucocutaneous lesions in acute radiation syndrome. In addition to acute nuclear illness, chronic problems of radiation ulcer are also reported. After a nuclear crisis, an increase has been shown in the incidence of dermatological diseases according to the well-known Chernobyl crisis. There are some interesting reports on the effect of nuclear exposure on the mucosa. The deterioration of the gastrointestinal and bronchial mucosa is confirmed. The overgrowth of microorganisms is observed which can be problematic. There are few reports on mucocutaneous tissues, as well. Increased viral mucocutaneous infections are reported but there is still lack of evidence on an actual increased incidence rate¹. An interest report quoted that 80 out of 115 Chernobyl crisis victims developed oropharyngeal problem². A very high incidence of various pathologies of

oral mucosa and lips is observed among children in exposed areas of Chernobyl³. In Tokaimura nuclear accident, pathological evaluation showed that the mucosa of the oropharynx and other parts of the gastrointestinal tract was entirely destroyed and depleted⁴. Poor oral mucosa health requires special attention. Careful examination of the oral mucocutaneous and orodental health is suggested. In addition to the oral mucous membrane, the mucocutaneous problem of the genitalia should also be noted. Indeed, this area seems to be a taboo in some cultures and examination might be overlooked. Finally, although there is no report on inducing mucocutaneous cancer, exposure to leaked radionuclide is proposed as a possible inducer for Sézary syndrome and mycosis fungoides⁵⁻⁶.

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