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OVARIAN CANCER ISSUE

Luzenac wants to stop the rumor about Ovarian cancer in order to free the development in cosmetic applications and avoid the initiation of a process for classification of talc as a carcinogen.

The scientific case

The existing case against talc is the result of the various works published by the small group of scientists working on the issue. These will not be willing to revise their interpretation of their findings.

They are frequently approached by industry on the ground « this weak association is not causal » and are reluctant to reopen the cases. The concept of non causality of the association needs to be strongly demonstrated.

The scientific case can only be reopened by new facts coming from a study conceived and carried out in their society.

Presently they think that there is a weak association and that talc may be a cause of OC.

HAC sees the following weaknesses in the case control studies : they are made on hospital cases and not on general population. Many cases of OC may have escaped the work with selection bias. This may be the origin of a false association. A reliable study must include all OC cases of a given area.

She does not buy the concept of more usage of talc from an increased need for hygiene practice among the precancerous cases.

The concept of Talc containing asbestos and talc equals asbestos is deeply implanted in the mind of the scientific community.

Action

Rebuilding a scientific case needs three steps :

- Reopen the interest by criticizing the present case and state clearly the unanswered questions. This must be made by two or three experts from the club. HAC will give us names. They have to make up their mind and write the questions.

- Create a consensus on the interpretation of the existing data and the need for further studies to answer the opened questions. This is made through a workshop where about 50

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experts of all the specialties involved are gathered : epidemiologists, clinicians, geneticists, pathologists, environmentalists, molecular biologists, specialists of animal models. Mineralogists from industry may eventually be accepted...

The workshop must be co-chaired by two first class scientists. It lasts one or two days. The various aspects are exposed, then the attendance is separated in several small groups, one by aspect of the issue. Each group gives its recommendations as regards subsequent action and the workshop concludes on the necessity and the content of further studies.

It is important to gather the experts who do not think along our wishes. They have a strong prevention against anything coming from industry, including their consultants.

The cost of the workshop includes \$ 300 to 500 per day for participants, plus all expenses and sophisticated facilities for meeting, group discussions etc. A part can be funded by Governments, universities etc.

- According the outcome of the workshop, studies can be initiated : epidemiology, animal experimentation etc.

Typically an epidemiological study lasts 5 years and costs between \$ 2.5 and 5mio. It can also be funded by Governmental organizations like National Cancer Institute etc if they recognize the value of the subject.

Approach to key people.

It is highly important to properly identify the potential leaders who could manage the case. They must be recognized by their peers, have a strong leadership and be motivated for the issue.

HAC quotes the following names :

- Alice WHITTEMORE (Epidemiologist and statistician)
- Bruce PONDER of Cambridge (OC specialist, genetician), she recommends that we do not approach him before she talked with him.
- We mention Parazzini, she agrees he is good.

She will think and recommend us some names to start our work. These will then decide who should attend the workshop.

