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Volume 51, Issue 5, Pages 329 - 335

Published Online: 27 Feb 2008
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Research Article

Cancer incidence among male Massachusetts firefighters, 1987-2003

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Funded by:

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Cooperative Agreement; Grant Number: U60/OH008490

KEYWORDS
 firefighter • cancer • SMOR • police • surveillance

ABSTRACT

Background
 Firefighters are known to be exposed to recognized or probable carcinogens. Previous studies have found elevated risks of several types of cancers in firefighters.

Methods
 Standardized morbidity odds ratio (SMORs) were used to evaluate the cancer risk in white, male firefighters compared to police and all other occupations in the Massachusetts Cancer Registry from 1986 to 2003. Firefighters and police were identified by text search of the usual occupation field. All other occupations included cases with identifiable usual occupations not police or firefighter. Control cancers were those not associated with firefighters in previous studies.


Results
 Risks were moderately elevated among firefighters for colon cancer (SMOR = 1.36, 95% CI: 1.04-1.79), and brain cancer (SMOR = 1.90, 95% CI: 1.10-3.26). Weaker evidence of increased risk was observed for bladder cancer (SMOR = 1.22, 95% CI: 0.89-1.69), kidney cancer (SMOR = 1.34, 95% CI: 0.90-2.01), and Hodgkin's lymphoma (SMOR = 1.81, 95% CI: 0.72-4.53).

Conclusions
 These findings are compatible with previous reports, adding to the evidence that firefighters are at increased risk of a number of types of cancer. *Am. J. Ind. Med.* 51:329-335, 2008. © 2008 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

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