

Child cancer risk higher near nuclear plants: study

KUER FM
(2007-12-08)

BERLIN (Reuters) - A German study has found that young children living near nuclear power plants have a significantly higher risk of developing leukemia and other forms of cancer, a German newspaper reported on Saturday.

"Our study confirmed that in Germany a connection has been observed between the distance of a domicile to the nearest nuclear power plant and the risk of developing cancer, such as leukemia, before the fifth birthday," *Suddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper quoted the report as saying.

The newspaper said the study was done by the University of Mainz for Germany's Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BFS). A copy of the report was not immediately available.

The researchers found that 37 children within a 5-kilometer (3-mile) radius of nuclear power plants had developed leukemia between 1980 and 2003, while the statistical average during this time period was 17, the paper said.

The newspaper cited an unnamed radiation protection expert familiar with the study who said its conclusions understated the problem. He said the data showed there was an increased cancer risk for children living within 50 kilometers of a reactor.

German Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel said in a statement that he would examine the study. He said the BFS should also evaluate its findings.

Germany plans to prematurely shut down all of its nuclear power plants by the early 2020s.

(Reporting by Louis Charbonneau)

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