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Host institution: International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon, France

Oil production and risk of cancer in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is one of the oil rich regions, where public health effects of occupational and environmental exposure from the petroleum industry have been scarcely studied. Petroleum (crude oil) extraction and refining, although contribute tremendously to the economic growth of the country, are major sources of various occupational exposures and of environmental pollution. Both benzene and asbestos, well known as the common exposures of the petrochemical industry, are classified as Group 1 carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. However, no scientific research has been carried out to determine potential associations between petroleum related exposures and cancer development among current and former petroleum workers, or residents living near active or abandoned petroleum facilities in the region.

The proposed project addresses identifying and analysing stakeholders and potential collaborators for setting up an epidemiological study to investigate the association between exposure to petroleum and risk of cancer in Azerbaijan while elaborating on their roles in the fight against cancer, in public health or in policy making, and what the impact of such collaboration would be to the oil producing community and the entire region. The knowledge gained will be used to propose and conduct the epidemiological study in conjunction with relevant stakeholders which will allow the region to be part of an endeavour seeking to ensure harmonisation of study protocols and exposure assessments within the context of an international collaboration.