



JOHNS HOPKINS  
BLOOMBERG  
SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH

Department of Epidemiology  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
415 N. Washington Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21231

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Memorandum

To: Trialists

Fr: Curtis Meinert

Re: Association versus cause

Epidemiology is about relationships, not proofs. Proofs are hard to come by.

The warning on cigarettes issued in 1969 by the Surgeon General was  
**The Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health**  
but does smoking cause disease? The presumption is it does, but proving it does is another matter.

In a previous posting I wrote about my contribution to Rachel Carlson's **Silent Spring**. Her writing was largely responsible for removing DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) from the market without definitive proof of harm and misgivings about the decision (9 June 2022; More counting at Cal Pac).

In 1834 William Love started digging a canal to link the upper and lower Niagara River, bypassing the Falls. The water flow down the escarpment, in Love's scheme was to power the industry of a new "Model City" — but the invention of alternating current and practical power transmission torpedoed the scheme with only 3,200 feet of canal dug (Wikipedia).

In early 1900 the canal was used as a dump by the city of Niagara Falls. Subsequently, the canal was purchased by the Hooker Chemical Company (1947) for use as a dump site for byproducts from its manufacturing plant.

A fifteen-acre tract of land along the canal was residential, ultimately consisting of about 800 single-family homes. Over the years residents complained of seepage of foul liquids into basements. Ultimately the houses were bulldozed and land cleared (2004).

A good summary of the history and events surrounding the canal can be found on  
<https://research.lib.buffalo.edu/love-canal/timeline-and-photos>.

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There is a parade of cases, primarily to the benefit of lawyers.

For example, is exposure to Roundup (a glyphosate-based herbicide) a risk for cancer? It depends on who you ask. The World Health Organization has designated the herbicide as "probably carcinogenic" but there are no label warnings in the U.S.

Peter Angelos, the owner of the Baltimore Orioles, earned his fortune from payments for asbestos health claims and by representing Maryland in suits against tobacco companies.

Watch TV and you will see ads that billions of dollars have been set aside by asbestos manufacturers to pay individuals diagnosed with mesothelioma, lung cancer, and other asbestos-related diseases and a number to call to see if persons qualify for damages.

And there is the film “Erin Brockovich” about her quest to hold PG&E responsible for water pollution. The closing scene with Ed Masry (Albert Finney) is priceless.

Masry’s closing line “Do they teach beauty queens how to apologize? Because you suck at it!” as he hands Erin Brockovich a check for much more than she had asked for (Erin's Big Bonus - Erin Brockovich UTube Movie clip).

Now it is Camp Lejeune’s toxic water.

**If you or a family member  
were stationed at, or lived on Camp Lejeune, North Carolina  
between 1953 and 1982 for at least 30 cumulative days and  
developed one of the following cancers,  
compensation may be available to you.**

- 1 Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML)
- 2 Bladder cancer
- 3 Brain cancer
- 4 Breast cancer
- 5 Central Nervous System cancer (CNS)
- 6 Cervical cancer
- 7 Esophageal cancer
- 8 Hodgkins Lymphoma
- 9 Kidney cancer
- 10 Leukemia
- 11 Liver cancer
- 12 Lung cancer
- 13 Multiple myeloma
- 14 Myelodysplastic Syndrome
- 15 Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma
- 16 Ovarian cancer
- 17 Prostate cancer
- 18 Rectal cancer

And so it goes.