

Low Dose Radiation Path Forward

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I think that it was clear to most conference attendees that there will be no progress unless the major international guidance organizations move together with a common vision. Equally clear, at least to me, are the barriers that have prevented them from doing that in the past and will certainly prevent them from cooperating in the future - absent some major change in perception on the part of the organizations' members. That change in perception will require both a scientifically solid basis, and significant emotional impact.

Wade Allison provided the key in his abstract. Unfortunately, his presentation did not even resemble his abstract. The next conflict between superpowers will be between Russia and China. Western nations will be bit players if they do not continue the development of nuclear power needed to maintain economic strength. The international organizations that need to cooperate are fundamentally Western institutions that China and Russia can ignore. These organizations are likely to become irrelevant if the Eastern countries become the dominant nuclear powers driven by economic competition that gives them the strength to ignore Western opinion.

Currently, it seems to me that the guidance organizations have a vested interest in keeping radiation protection complex and mysterious; only to be understood by the most sophisticated scientific minds. For example, the relationship between Greys and Sieverts should be simple enough for anyone to understand. Instead it is extremely complex and shrouded in mystery. This is good for people who need to publish papers, but not so good for everyone else. This can change only if their organizational status is challenged. A shift from West to East would do that. But how to make them see that?

Additional Thoughts:

The feedback that I've seen seems to be converging on an approach for proceeding:

The international guidance organizations must start collaborating to establish guidance for a uniformly-accepted international protocol for dealing with low dose radiation protection. That protocol must include a basis for making evacuation decisions.

I believe that we must stop telling the public to not worry; everything is safe. We must acknowledge that as long as we depend on technology for a good standard of living *there will be periodic releases of hazardous materials* (both chemical and radiological) and *we must provide structures for prevention and mitigation of these hazards* just as we must deal with the hazards presented by automobiles and other features of our comfortable life style. I think that this is the message from the Fukushima Dialogues.