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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

[Announcement Number 521]

Occupational Radiation and Energy-Related Health Research Grants; Notice of Availability of Funds for Fiscal Year 1995

Introduction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), announces that applications are being accepted for research projects relating to occupational safety and health concerns associated with occupational exposures to radiation and other hazardous agents at nuclear facilities and in other energy-related industries. Studies in the nuclear power industry and deliberate exposure of human subjects in radiation experiments are outside the scope of this announcement.

The Public Health Service (PHS) is committed to achieving the health promotion and disease prevention objectives of "Healthy People 2000," a PHS-led national activity to reduce morbidity and mortality and improve the quality of life. This announcement is related to the priority area of Occupational Safety and Health. (For ordering a copy of "Healthy People 2000," see the section "Where to Obtain Additional Information.")

Authority

This program is authorized under the Public Health Service Act, as amended, Section 301(a) (42 U.S.C. 241(a)) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Section 20(a) (29 U.S.C. 669[a]). The applicable program regulations are in 42 CFR Part 52.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include domestic and foreign non-profit and for-profit organizations, universities, colleges, research institutions, and other public and private organizations, including State and local governments and small, minority and/or woman-owned businesses.

Smoke-Free Workplace

The Public Health Service strongly encourages all grant recipients to provide a smoke-free workplace and promote the non-use of all tobacco products. This is consistent with the PHS mission of promoting the protection and advancement of an individual's physical and mental health.

Availability of Funds

Approximately \$500,000 is available in FY 1995 to fund approximately 3 to 5 research project grants (R01). The amount of funding available may vary and is subject to change. Awards will range from \$25,000 to \$200,000 in total costs (direct and indirect) per year. Awards are expected to begin on or about September 1, 1995. Awards will be made for a 12-month budget period within a project period not to exceed 3 years. Continuation awards within the project period will be made on the basis of satisfactory progress and availability of funds.

Purpose

NIOSH will support applied field research projects to identify and investigate the relationships between health outcomes and occupational exposure to radiation and other hazardous agents; epidemiologic methods research relevant to energyrelated occupational health research; and research related to assessing occupational exposures.

Programmatic Interest

The focus of grants should reflect the following topical areas, emphasizing field research: (1) Occupational exposure assessment, (2) radiation measurement issues, (3) non-cancer morbidity and mortality outcomes, (4) meta-analysis and combined analysis methodologies, (5) uncertainty analysis, (6) effects of measurement error on risk estimates, and (7) studies of current workers.

(1) Retrospective Exposure Assessment

Epidemiologic studies of occupational cohorts frequently involve, and can generally benefit from, retrospective exposure assessment to provide estimates of exposure or categorize groups of workers by common exposure. Exposure assessment in energy-related occupational epidemiology requires evaluating exposures to various hazards including ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, metals, acids, and solvents.

Grant opportunities encompass the fields of industrial hygiene and retrospective exposure assessment of health physics dosimetry. Research areas of general interest include: Methods to use limited data to best advantage; how to treat censored data in retrospective exposure assessment; uncertainty analysis techniques for industrial hygiene exposure data and health physics dosimetry; insight to sampling strategy design yielding a representative understanding of exposed groups; decision logic to select/use the most appropriate exposure metric for epidemiologic and risk assessment use; and, development approaches of "Homogeneous Exposed Groupings" and the advantages/limitations for epidemiologic use. Research opportunities of specific interest include: reconstruction and dose adjustment of historic film badges; exposure assessment for acid mists, carcinogenic solvents, exotic metals, and leukemogens; assessment of electromagnetic field exposure; and evaluation of biomarkers of exposure.

(2) Radiation Measurement Issues

This topic will focus on the applicability and utility of radiation dose data in epidemiological research. Examples of such issues include how to use nondetectable values and missing dose data in historical radiation exposure measurements, the accuracy of historical external dosimetry techniques (film and pocket dosimeters), combining external and internal doses into a useful index, historical bioassay, and radiochemistry techniques.

(3) Non-cancer Morbidity and Mortality Outcomes

The majority of analytical epidemiologic research of health effects of energy-related occupational and environmental exposures has focused historically on the assessment of the association between cancer mortality and exposure to ionizing radiation. Although the importance of this research should not be underestimated, it is essential that other potential adverse health effects, as well as other possible energy-related exposures, be thoroughly evaluated as well. Among these would be the possible effects of radiation on the reproductive, neurologic, and immune systems. Chemical exposures highly prevalent in Department of Energy facilities, such as beryllium and mercury, have also been associated with a variety of disease outcomes, particularly respiratory and neurologic in nature.