



Unearthing the dangers of working with lead on human health

Tens of thousands of lead workers may be at risk from health issues including cancer, kidney disease, heart disease and brain damage without even realising it. These safety concerns led the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) to investigate links between lead exposure and cancer.

In 2015, with funding from the Colt Foundation and the Health and Safety Executive, IOM published one of the largest studies ever carried out into the causes of death within lead exposed workers. The study provided evidence that occupational exposure to lead could be associated with increased death from ischaemic heart diseases and lung cancer. Subsequently the study has filled an important knowledge gap identified as a research priority by IARC.