



Study of Workers in the Glass-Reinforced Plastics Industry in the UK and a possible International Study

The Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), based in Edinburgh, is carrying out an analysis of one the UK components of a potential international study of the long-term health of around 1,800 workers who were employed in the glass-reinforced plastics manufacturing industry. They were from around 50 different companies and employed at some time between 1961 and 1988. Subject to receiving the appropriate clearances in a timely manner, it is anticipated that the analysis of the UK study will be completed during 2020. The international study, if funded, will potentially include over 90,000 workers from Finland, Italy, Denmark and the US, as well as the UK. IOM are a not-for-profit organisation based in Edinburgh, Scotland. For more information, see www.iom-world.org. For more information about the study see <https://www.iom-world.org/research/our-expertise/styrene-study/>.

What is the purpose of the study?

At present there is no clear evidence that occupational exposures in glass reinforced plastics manufacturing industry affects the risks of disease or death. The UK and international studies aim to assess the evidence by comparing the death and cancer registration rates in those who have worked in the industry with those in the general population. In addition, the international study will make comparisons between the different subgroups of the styrene-exposed workers. The international study will be the most powerful study to date that will help clarify whether or not occupational exposure to styrene has the potential to increase a person's risk of cancer. The UK study is being led by Professor Damien McElvenny at the IOM, and the international study will be led by Professor Henrik Kolstad of the University of Aarhus in Denmark, both very experienced scientists working in this area.

Why am I being told about this?

We want to bring both the UK study and the potential international study to the attention of current and former workers in the industry, or their close family relatives, to inform them that this research is taking place. Anyone who thinks they may be a part of the study, but does not want their details used in this new study may opt out by contacting us (see contact details below).

Will my details be kept confidential?

IOM will not disclose details of any worker studied to any third party, except for the purposes of obtaining death and cancer registration details for those participants that may have died or who have contracted cancer, nor will the IOM or Aarhus University identify anyone in any publications arising from the study. Any data supplied to the Aarhus University for the international analysis will be anonymised. The data used in analyses will consist of month and year of birth, details of work carried out in the industry (for the assessment of exposure to styrene) the timing of this work and any mortality or cancer registration data.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This study may help identify whether there are any health risks from having worked in the glass reinforced plastics manufacturing industry in the UK or elsewhere.

What happens to the results of the research study?

The IOM and other researchers involved in the international study will publish the results of the research in scientific journals. We will also distribute a leaflet summarising the UK and any international study's findings to the industry.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The UK study is being funded by the Health and Safety Executive. Funding is still being sought for the International Study.



Who has reviewed the study?

The study will be reviewed by a National Health Service (NHS) Ethics Committee, by the Health Research Authority's Confidentiality Advisory Group, and by NHS Digital's Independent Group Advising on Release of Data. If you wish to seek further advice in relation to any workplace exposures you may have received, we suggest you contact your employer or your trade union representative.

What am I being asked to do?

If you think you are included in the study and you're happy for your details to be included, then you need do nothing further. **If you (or a relative on your behalf) do not want your details to be used in the study, then please contact the study team directly at styrene@iom-world.org or telephone 0131 449 8000 and ask for the Styrene Study Team**, and your details will be removed from the research database.