Radiation Safety Counseling News

Presentations at the Health Physics Society Midyear Meeting, Baton Rouge, LA

Dear Reader,

Ray Johnson

Earlier this year I conducted two presentations and one continuing education lecture at the Midyear Meeting for the Health Physics Society. The topics were Basis for Sentiments Against Nuclear Power and Interpretation of Radiation Measurements. Below is a synopsis of each with links to the session handouts.

As always, your questions or feedback are welcomed. Feel free to contact us through email, our blog, or our Facebook page.

Regards,
Ray Johnson
ray@radiationcounseling.org
Radiation Safety Counseling Services

Basis for Sentiments Against Nuclear Power

Many insights for antinuclear activism have come to light from studies on how people make decisions for radiation safety as reported in the HPS newsletter over the past year. Studies have shown that most safety decisions come from the subconscious mind and are not the product of careful logical analysis. Everyone is programmed to fear first and think second. While our normal fear response is appropriate for reacting to a striking snake, it does not do very well for safety issues such as radiation. And yet, for our safety we have to make judgments even without perfect knowledge. We process, sort, compare, categorize information for coherency in relation to our immediate circumstances, experiences, and life factors, such as health, wealth, traditions, and lifestyles. Emotion is also a big factor in decisions for safety guided by feelings of liking or disliking, with little deliberation or reasoning. When a question is difficult and a knowledgeable solution is not readily available, an answer may still come quickly to mind based on feelings.

To read the complete paper as well as view the slides from Ray's presentation at the HPS Midyear Meeting, click the link below.

Basis for Sentiments Against Nuclear Power (pdf)

Quick Links

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We are on facebook

We have created a Facebook page for the Radiation Safety Counseling Institute. This is another resource for the sharing of radiation safety related information and questions.

Click below to visit our page!

Find us on Facebook

Got Questions?

If you have a question about radiation safety that you would like to share, please post your question on our Forum (blog) or our Facebook page. Each week our experts will select a question and post an answer that will also be included in our monthly newsletter.

To post a question go to:
Radiation Safety Forum
or
RSCI on Facebook

Interpretation of Radiation Measurements

The interpretation of radiation measurements may have as much to do with attitudes and perceptions of radiation risks as it does about technology. The very same measurement may have a wide variety of meanings to different people. For example, a technician at a nuclear plant saw a small blip on the readout of a whole body scan of a worker and announced, "Wow, we have a hot one here!" While the blip was technically interesting, although of no health significance, the worker heard the result as a matter of life and death. Litigation followed which cost the nuclear plant over $1.5 million for defense. Many times concerned persons have concluded that if radiation is measureable, it must be bad. Interpretation of the measurements becomes a matter of responding to fears of radiation. One person defending their conservative decision said, "Why take chances?" While this may seem prudent as a matter of the "precautionary principle - better to be safe than sorry," such decisions could not be technically defended in terms of potential risks from radiation. Much more information is needed for interpreting radiation measurements for determining health risks.

I propose that there are two key factors governing interpretation of radiation measurements:1) measurements have no meaning until interpreted and 2) measurements only have meaning in terms of how they are interpreted.

To read the complete papers as well as view the slides from Ray's presentation and continuing education lecture at the HPS Midyear Meeting, click the links below.

Interpretation of Radiation Measurements (pdf)

Interpretation of Radiation Measurements CEL-4 (pdf)

Communication Insights

Each week, we post another installment of guidance to improve communication with others. To stay informed, you can go to our blog and click on Follow: RSS, then choose to "Subscribe to this Feed".

You can also go to our Facebook page and choose "Like" to have our status updates displayed on your Facebook wall.

We hope you find this information helpful and welcome your comments, questions, or other feedback.

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