

IARC adds to 'risk' vs 'hazard' confusion

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

According to IARC's own "Preamble" setting out its mission (emphasis added), *"A cancer 'hazard' is an agent that is capable of causing cancer under some circumstances, while a cancer 'risk' is an estimate of the carcinogenic effects expected from exposure to a cancer hazard."*

Revealingly, the Preamble goes on to state (emphasis added), *"The Monographs are an exercise in evaluating cancer hazards, despite the historical presence of the word 'risks' in the title. The distinction between hazard and risk is important, and the Monographs identify cancer hazards even when risks are very low at current exposure levels, because new uses or unforeseen exposures could engender risks that are significantly higher."*

If IARC wants to claim, as it does in the Preamble, that it is doing something very different from assessing cancer risk in its group deliberations, shouldn't the agency change the title of its Monograph series, replacing the word "risks" with "hazards"?

The agency states that the distinction between hazard and risk is "important." But apparently it is not important enough for IARC to change the title of the Monographs, thereby making clear that its approach to identifying carcinogens is something very different from how it appears to normal people when the conclusions of its assessments are picked up by the media and offered up to the general public as if they contained urgent and useful information.

Read full, original post: [Having It Both Ways On What Causes Cancer](#)