Social Attention on ARD in Japan
At 10 Years From the Kubota Shock

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Background/Objective

• The CR on 24 June released its 18th Statement, “Global Health Dimensions of Asbestos and ARD.”
• The timing coincided with civil groups’ meeting in Japan to commemorate 10 years from “Kubota Shock.”

http://www.amrc.org.hk/content/Japanese-asbestos-scandal

• /Probe general perception and attitude on ARD in Japan in context of CR statement
Methods/Approach

- **Describe** media interest and coverage of the anniversary as well as of the CR Statement
- Contribute to and **observe** at civil group’s meeting
- Discuss general perception and attitudes
Media Report on 10th Anniversary of Kubota Shock

DB = Nikkei Telecom

Search Period: June 1 thru July 11, 2015

• 75 Items on coverage

• 45 Nationwide Newspapers, 23 General (Local) Newspapers, 3 TV News Flashes, 4 TV Broadcasts
Nationwide Newspapers/Broadcasts

DB = Nikkei Telecom

Search Period: June 1 thru July 11, 2015

45 Nationwide Newspaper Articles / NHK Broadcasts

- Mainichi 25
- Asahi 10
- Nikkei 5
- Yomiuri 5
- Sankei 1
- NHK News 4
- *Nil* by Kyodo, Jiji, Reuter!

"liberal"

"conservative"
Asbestos Damage Potential Hazards

Construction Material Examiner on Watch

Relief of Residents - Struggle for 10 Years

Mayor of Amagasaki City “Prevent future incidents and pass on lessons ...”

Featured Article on Asbestos Mainichi, 28 June 2015

_in double spread space_
Collaboration with Italian Victims Visits Amagasaki, Discusses Relief

European Victims and Bereaved Families Pay Visit Today’s Meeting Commemorating Kubota Shock

Hosting of Asbestos Victims from Abroad
27 June 2015 Mainichi & Asahi
General (Local) Newspapers

DB = Nikkei Telecom

Search Period: June 1 thru July 11, 2015

23 General (Local) Newspaper Articles

- Akita Sakigage 1
- Shizuoka 1
- Kyoto 2
- Kobe 18
- Miyazaki Nichinichi 1
29 June Mainichi (Hanshin Local)

**Observation:** Civil group’s meeting attended by victims & families, their supporters (NGOs), media, a handful of administrators & politicians (all local level) and some academicians.

29 June Kobe Shimbun Asbestos Meeting: “Report on Disaster in Developing Countries”

Observation: Media coverage around Kubota Shock was extensive with little bias on the liberal to conservative scale.
TV News Flashes (3) and Broadcasts (4)

DB = Nikkei Telecom

Search Period: June 1 thru July 11, 2015

- Nikkei News Flash 2
- Asahi Shimbun News Flash 1
- Em Data TV Watch 1
- Conventional Programms and Press Information 3
Media Report on 18\textsuperscript{th} Statement of \textsc{cr} (Global Health Dimensions, Asbestos)

- Mainichi (nationwide, \textit{liberal}) reporter requests interview on 10\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of Kubota Shock
- Reporter “tipped,” takes interest
- University rules: “Researchers should report to management on any interview” $\Leftrightarrow$ “university will assist researchers via press release”
- \textit{Deal} with Mainichi: University will do press release on 24 June, \textit{i.e.}, Mainichi’s preferred day to carry article (“exclusive”) > Proceeded as scheduled

\textit{Downside: No other newspaper took it up} !!
Media Report on 18th Statement of CR (Global Health Dimensions, Asbestos)

Prevention of ARDs

June 24, 2015

“Asbestos – Call for Worldwide Ban”

International Body Issues Statement Today
Asbestos – Call for Worldwide Ban
International Body Issues Statement Today

The **Collegium Ramazzini (Headquarters Italy; CR)** will release on 24 June, a position statement calling for a worldwide ban on asbestos and the need to treat asbestos-related diseases (ARD) as a global issue. The CR is comprised of researchers and physicians of 35 countries specializing in the health effects of environmental pollution. The WHO and ILO give weight to research produced by CR members, many of whom are considered the worlds authority, and so progress can be expected on international measures for asbestos.

The WHO estimates that 107,000 people die every year from mesothelioma and lung cancer caused by asbestos. About 50 countries including Japan banned its use, but currently 2 million tons are produced most of which are used by developing countries. Due to the long latency period reaching 40 years for mesothelioma, it is predicted that many patients will surface especially in Asia.

In view of this background, the statement proposes to treat ARDs as a “global health issue,” similar to AIDS and malaria, and urges countries to share preventive and treatment measures for ARDs. It goes on to point out that ARDs such as mesothelioma are “100% preventable” and calls for a worldwide ban on asbestos.

The “Kubota Shock” revealed in June 2005 damaged the health of residents living near the Kanzaki factory of the company Kubota and is famous in the world. **Professor Philip Landrigan, President of the CR and Professor at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine**, responded to an interview by Mainichi saying, **“The world should learn from the Kubota Shock and never repeat it again.”**

Professor Ken Takahashi (Environmental Epidemiology) of the University of Occupational and Environmental Health, Japan, said “The statement is hoped to promote international countermeasures on asbestos.”

The CR, established in 1982, is an academic organization dealing with occupational and environmental health issues. It is comprised of 180 world class researchers and clinicians. The CR in 2008 urged reduction in the use of lead in consideration of adverse human health effects and in 2013 advocated effective measures against endocrine disrupting chemicals.

The statement is scheduled for release on the homepage of the CR. (Mirai Nagira)
Observations/Findings

• Media interest and coverage of anniversary and CR statement, in general, was fair to extensive but clearly biased towards “liberal” media (general perception?)

• “Presence” invisible of government and responsible company (cf. 10 yr anniversary of a serious railway accident near Kubota)
Conclusion

• Level of awareness and interest in general has waned (inevitable?)

• To further advance that “Asbestos & ARD is a GH issue” awareness should be raised among a wider population base
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