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CAN MEDICATION FOR HYPERTENSION BE A FACTOR IN CAUSING CANCER?

BY: SCOTT A. O'MARA

The International Agency for Research on Cancer otherwise known as "IARC" is a part of the World Health Organization (WHO). This agency, IARC, was established to garner information from various entities and combine those findings as to the risk and causes of cancer.

The IARC seeks out information as to the various types of cancers and what factors of life, or exposures in life, can be a developmental factor in the cause of human cancer.

The IARC identifies various elements that are carcinogens or elements of carcinogens that cause cancer. These elements or a combination of those can be a substantial factor in the manifestation and development of cancer.

California workers compensation has a cancer presumption for active firefighters and peace officers which is stated in Labor Code §3212.1. The Labor Code specifically defines cancers that can be job based upon the showing of proof of certain types of exposures to known carcinogens. A carcinogen known are defined by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). There are publications in *A Newsletter* that has been presented by IARC, the most recent dated December 20, 2024, Issue #10 found that certain medications that are taken by patients for hypertension, peripheral edema, or other medication which is utilized to minimize certain fungal or yeast infections, are a carcinogens.

Additional medications that are used to treat risk for additional problems such as cell organ transplant, treating dermatitis and as stated controlling the level of blood pressure. These medications are now classified as a Carcinogen Group 1. The evidence reviewed that these types of medications can be a factor if the manifestation and/or development such as squamous cell carcinoma, cancer of the lips, basal cell carcinoma and skin. These findings as a Carcinogen Group 1 expands the protections available out of Labor Code §3212.1.

This study reflects knowledge that the treating doctors must consider when prescribing medications that may be a substantial factor in manifestation development of various cancers.

The California worker also must be aware that certain medication for blood pressure can be a factor in the development of certain types of cancer.

The medical care under the California system, whether it is for cancer or other conditions that are job-related, is to cure or relieve the effects of the injury. If in fact the worker is taking the medication for a job-related injury and it causes other medical problems, this becomes the responsibility of the workers' compensation system.

The continuation of expanding knowledge that we have as to the carcinogens and their impact allows some ability to various doctors to make a medical opinion as to the best approach to treat to cure or relieve the effects of the injuries, or numerous other medical problems that could be an additional factor for the development of cancer.

As the worker is aware, medical care to cure or relieve the effects of the injury is paramount to getting better. At the same time the worker and the doctor needs to be aware of the risk factors that may evolve because of the types of treatment.

The World Health Organization continues to use studies which help all parties involved in making a better decision regarding medical care.

In the workers' compensation system the statute of limitations to file on the cancer case can be limited to no more than 120-months from the last day of work. That statement of 120-months is based upon the number of years that the worker has been employed. Even with that, 120-months, there are many exceptions that go way beyond that depending upon the period of time from development of manifestation of the disease. The new finding of certain medications being a Carcinogen Group 1 requires knowledge on behalf of the treater and the individual seeking the medical care to cure and relieve the effects of the injury.

As new studies evolve we will have more information as to what may be the more accurate treatment, not only for cancer, but other medical treatment that may raise the likelihood of other cancers developing.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) studies and findings are very important and a reliable source of information regarding the types of care and treatment the injured worker should receive. Additionally, the worker should go to www.webmd and look at the area that speaks of the risk of side effects of the medications that they are taking and inform if there are side effects to the treating doctor.



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