

PRESS RELEASE

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Deaths Shake Nanotechnology Community

" ... could easily have been prevented," Director of International Council on Nanotechnology says on science news radio program

Dallas, Texas (Aug. 25, 2009) The nanotechnology community has been shaken deeply with reports out of China in the case where seven women, ages 18-47, were exposed to nanoparticles resulting in serious illness and two deaths.

The story was first reported in the highly credible European Respiratory Journal and Reuters this month, causing members of the nanotechnology community everywhere scrambling to explain what could have gone wrong.

"We have done numerous programs on nano safety, constantly driving home that we must be safe, and are safe with nanotechnology," said Colonel Mason, science news editor and host of *The Promise of Tomorrow* radio program aired in Dallas/Fort Worth on KMNY 1360AM talk radio. "This kind of news has all of us in a dither to put down unfounded fears about nanotechnology," said Mason.

Reaction was swift from Pete Singer of SmallTimes Magazine, who at first seemed surprisingly callus and defensive. Singer's comments circulated by email to subscribers declared "at the risk of sounding heartless, I don't see this as a 'nano' issue -- it's a matter of workers breathing in dust that just happens to be at the nano level. Similar dangers exist in any kind of manufacturing environment. It is easy to get worked up over the potential dangers of 'grey goo,' and to start comparing CNTs to asbestos ... but for now I believe that common sense safety procedures are all that's needed to avoid any major problems."

Dr. Walt Trybula of NANO-SAFETY was also quick to confront the question, but seemed more compassionate, saying "the deaths of the two women and the injury of their colleagues is a tragedy. While nanoparticles have been identified in autopsies, other information from UK toxicologists indicate that the incident might have been prevented by applying existing safety practices currently available. It is even possible that the primary cause was chemical exposure not nanoparticles. I have been tracking the published material and posting the links on www.nano-safety.info."

"Dr. Trybula is scheduled to be our guest on a follow-up show when we have more time to explore the safety questions," said Mason, but the first thing we did was contact Dr. Kristen Kulinowski at the Smalley Nanotech Institute at Rice University

in Houston. She is a real authority and was available to come on the radio program right away. We produce our programs ten days in advance so they don't very well accommodate breaking news. We had to squeeze her in for the show being aired August 30 at 7pm. Then it will be posted at the website where it is heard world-wide."

Dr. Kulinowski is a Faculty fellow in the Department of Chemistry at Rice University, Executive Director for policy for the Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology, and the Director of the International Council on Nanotechnology. On the radio program she is expected to explain that "the real tragedy is that these workers could have been protected if a conventional chemical hygiene plan that included a working ventilation system and personal protective equipment had been available." The workers were affected in their lungs from nanoparticles in a polyacrylate material air-sprayed onto polystyrene. The dead were aged 19 and 29.

Up-Coming Programs:

In addition to this tragic news story, the program on Aug. 30 will feature the ***Oxford Quiz***, a sort of cultural Olympics. Academic questions covering diversified fields that include science, literature, language, art, etc. and were put to 1100 students in four American and eight British universities. Listeners will be able to see how they stack up to the brains at Oxford and other universities when they take the quiz. Also on future shows will be a guest appearance with nanotech pioneer and Nobel Laureate Harry Kroto of Buckyball fame, an in-depth look at the life of Rick Smalley, and a blockbuster on Climate Change (months in research) that may be a series.

About *The Promise of Tomorrow* radio program:

The radio program, *The Promise of Tomorrow* with Colonel Mason, studies the commercial business of emerging science and nanotechnology, and has a history of keeping abreast of breaking commercial advances. It is aired in Dallas and Fort Worth with a possible audience of over two million, then archived on the Web to an audience that is world-wide, www.PromiseOfTomorrow.biz and receives about 9000 page views per month.

The award-winning creator and host of the program is veteran news reporter, Colonel Mason. Past programs featured reports on how nanotechnology has led to human gum regeneration; nanotechnology in Iran, Singapore, China, Israel, and around the world; how nanotech coatings bring protection from graffiti; how Texas is funding new firms in emerging technologies.

Other important topics covered include biodegradable plastics; atomic manipulation and building things with atomic precision for practical uses; medicine; nerve regeneration, human tissue interfacing with bionics; artificial muscles; the fallacy of Corn BioFuels; the promise of Algae; targeting cancer tumors with nanotechnology

and colloidal gold based compounds administered directly at the site of the disease while not affecting other organs; water purification using nanotechnology; how hydrogen is abundant and easy to collect, and (in solid form) the next fuel needed to replace gasoline, jet fuel, and generate electricity; plus views from scientific living legends and Nobel Laureates.

The hour long program is a wealth of information each week, also featuring headline news in emerging science, the latest tiny tech jobs, wise advice from the *Den of Strangers*, and what has become the very popular *Voice of Reason*. It is aired each Sunday from 7 to 8 pm on KMNY 1360AM radio www.RationalRadio.org, then promptly archived on the Web. Colonel Mason welcomes suggestions on topics and/or guests. Email to colonel@prfirm1.com or contact directly by phone at 214.329.4949

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