

Source

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Abstract

In 1985, Brown Coal Liquefaction (Victoria) Pty Ltd (BCLV) commenced operation of a pilot plant that investigated the feasibility of producing oil from brown coal. The plant operated for five years. This study aimed to use exposure and health information routinely collected by the company to characterize various health parameters of the workforce and to investigate whether any adverse health measures were exposure-related. About 1680 persons were employed at some time or other by BCLV, and the primary study population consisted of 408 workers who had a medical examination at the end of employment and who consented to being in an epidemiological study. Reported photosensitivity was associated with higher cumulative skin exposure (RR = 1.85; 95% CI = 1.22-2.78), with an exposure-response relationship of increasing risk with increasing skin exposure being suggested. There was no consistent evidence that chemical exposure at BCLV had any negative effect on the haematological, biochemical, endocrine or lung function of workers at the plant. However, the maximum follow-up period of less than eight years limits the ability of the study to detect any emerging chronic effects.