

SEP 8 1970

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to Sam Epstein

Sam: I really cannot let this argument go unchallenged, having heard it several times originally from you.

For one thing, it would imply that there are no gradations in carcinogenic activity. For another, mere random fluctuations in a large scale survey will give some observations a "significantly" high estimate. (Self-evidently, 1/120 of the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Bionetics group should be expected to give a spurious positive result with apparent significance $p < .01$.) What confidence do you have that a replication of such a series would give precisely the same list of offenders?

In particular, it is certain that some mild carcinogens are exculpated merely for having been tested on too small a scale.

So this ~~XXXXXX~~ kind of study is really not responsive to the question ~~(Q)~~ (Q). What you should say is that some compounds are evidently much more carcinogenic than others, and that only some of these will be detected by the tests customarily enforced at the present time.

If we insist on a pure black/white approach, we will have to condemn all meat, milk and fish, if not all food completely, which is bound to have at least one molecule of DDT per mouthful for at least another century.