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EDF in England

# Breast cancer figures spark fresh fears over nuclear power risk

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### **Fresh fears over the health effects of nuclear power were raised last night after new figures showed breast cancer diagnoses are 50 per cent above national figures in two areas near Hinkley Point in Somerset.**

French energy giant EDF wants to build a new reactor at the West's biggest power station but a study by Professor Chris Busby, of Green Audit, cast a shadow over claims the new reactor would not have ill-effects for those living nearby.

In response to the study, though, local public health chiefs insist there is still "no compelling evidence" of a link between Hinkley and statistical rates of cancer.

Professor Busby's study centres on the electoral wards of Burnham-on-Sea north and south, where 54 extra cases above average were recorded between 1994 and 2004.

The figures were confirmed by Professor Derek Pheby, former director of the South-Western Regional Cancer Registry and member of the Medical Research Council.

Anti-nuclear pressure group Stop Hinkley argues this is enough evidence to argue that a further power station should not be built.

But advisors with NHS Somerset said yesterday: "The Primary Care Trust has seen no new or compelling evidence to date which would support campaigner's hypothesis that radioactive pollution arising from the past operation or the recent decommissioning of the Hinkley Point, is responsible for a statistical increase in the incidence of breast or any other cancer in the surrounding area."

Stop Hinkley obtained the figures after a House of Lords ruling allowed 'incidence' or 'diagnosis' data to be made available.

Previously only 'mortality' data or death rates were available.

Stop Hinkley says incidence data is more helpful in linking environmental causes to health effects as bigger statistics are involved.

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#### **Hinkley Point**

Hinkley Point

It applied to the South West Public Health Observatory to provide the figures under the Freedom of Information Act and commissioned Prof Busby to analyse them.

Between 1994 to 2004, 113 women would have been expected to contract breast cancer. Prof Busby found 167 women were diagnosed, 50 per cent higher than normal.

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According to Professor Pheby, the random chance of this occurrence in the two electoral wards was one in two million. Stop Hinkley says the study backs up several previous health studies.

In a discussion with Professor Busby, health officials at SWPHO suggested that the whole region's breast cancer rate is one quarter higher than the national average, reducing some of the claimed Burnham excess. But Prof Busby says the Office of National Statistics national and regional figures confirm the risk at Burnham.

Professor Pheby has called on the Observatory and Professor Busby to collaborate on future studies.

Jim Duffy, Stop Hinkley coordinator said: "With confirmed breast cancer rates like this it would be inhuman to allow Hinkley C to go ahead with its massive outpourings of radio-isotopes."

### **EdF tenders for turbine halls**

Electricité de France (EdF) has launched a tender for the supply and construction of turbine halls for proposed new EPR-based nuclear power plants in France and the UK.

According to the tender announcement, "The contract is to cover the studies, the procurement, the manufacture, the transport, the on-site supervision, the commissioning and possibly the erection on site of the equipment and systems that constitute the turbine hall of nuclear power plants."

Under the contract, one turbine hall is to be supplied for the proposed new Penly EPR plant in France and two turbine halls for the proposed two-unit Hinkley Point C plant in Somerset, UK. In addition, the contract may be extended to other potential new plants in the UK.

EdF noted that the turbine hall operates with a thermal output from the nuclear island estimated about 4500 MW thermal. The gross output to be provided by each unit is around 1750 MW, the company said.

The contract on offer has been split into two lots – one for Penly and one for Hinkley Point - which may be awarded separately, EdF said.

Researched and written by World Nuclear News

[http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-EdF\\_tenders\\_for\\_turbine\\_halls-2110105.html](http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/NN-EdF_tenders_for_turbine_halls-2110105.html)