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No rise in cancer rates after Fukushima disaster - UN



The Fukushima nuclear plant was crippled by the deadly earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011

Cancer rates are not expected to rise as a result of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan, UN scientists say.

The evacuation of thousands of people shortly after the accident in 2011 sharply lowered their exposure to radiation, a draft report concluded.

The World Health Organisation has said local residents have a slightly higher risk of developing certain cancers.

Reactors at the Fukushima nuclear plant were crippled by an earthquake and tsunami that killed some 19,000 people.

It was the world's worst nuclear incident since Chernobyl in 1986.

'No radiation-related deaths'

The findings of the draft report were presented by the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (Unscar) in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

Committee member Wolfgang Weiss said the decision by the Japanese authorities to evacuate large numbers of people had proved to be the right one.

"If that had not been the case, we might have seen the cancer rates rising and other health problems emerging over the next several decades," he added.

Unscar's report also stated that "no radiation-related deaths have been observed among nearly 25,000 workers involved at the accident site".

Studies after Chernobyl linked cases of thyroid cancer to radioactive iodine that contaminated milk. But Mr Weiss said that had not been the case in Japan.

The report was prepared by 80 scientists from 18 countries and will be published in full later

this year.

The findings contradicted a report published by the WHO in February, which said the risk of cancer for those living near the nuclear plant had risen.

Fukushima radiation caused little damage to health

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What a relief. It looks as if the local population and most of the workers exposed to radiation from the [Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear accident](#) in March 2011 will not have ill health as a result. That's the conclusion of the most comprehensive investigation yet into the likely health effects of the world's worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986.

"The actions taken by the authorities to protect the public, such as evacuation and sheltering, significantly reduced the radiation exposures," says Wolfgang Weiss, chairman of the panel of 80 scientists that produced [a report on the incident](#) for the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

So far none of the 25,000 workers at the site has become ill with radiation-related conditions. But about 170 workers with exposures exceeding 100 millisieverts— the equivalent of receiving the maximum safe annual industry dose over five years all at once— will be monitored to quickly detect any radiation-related effects on their thyroid, stomach, lungs and colon.