

July 20, 1994

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PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE PNO-II-94-038

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by Region II staff (Atlanta, Georgia) on this date.

Facility

West Virginia University Hospitals, Inc.
West Virginia University Hospitals
Morgantown, West Virginia

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
Alert
Site Area Emergency
General Emergency
X Not Applicable

Subject: THERAPY MISADMINISTRATIONS INVOLVING STRONTIUM-89

July 19, 1994, the licensee's Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) advised the NRC Operations Center that, between November 15, 1993 and July 8, 1994, fifteen patients were apparently administered less than the four millicuries (mCi) of strontium-89 (Sr-89) prescribed for palliative treatment of bone cancer. In seven of the cases, the amount of Sr-89 administered was less than the prescribed amount by at least 20 percent, and thus they are considered misadministrations.

In coordination with the radiopharmaceutical supplier, the licensee had established a procedure for measuring Sr-89 doses in the licensee's dose calibrator. The procedure used by the licensee involved drawing the supplied dose from a 10 milliliter (ml) vial, labeled as containing 4 mCi of Sr-89, into a syringe and then placing the syringe in the dose calibrator. Licensee personnel adjusted the amount of material in the syringe until it measured 4 mCi in the dose calibrator. When the licensee received a syringe labeled as containing 4 mCi which also assayed out at more than 4 mCi in the dose calibrator, the licensee contacted the supplier. In discussing the procedure with the supplier, the licensee determined that the dose calibrator correction factors being used were based on the geometry of the 10 ml vial rather than the 6 ml syringe used by the licensee.

The licensee has suspended Sr-89 treatments pending revision of their dose measurement procedures. Attending physicians and patients involved are being contacted. No adverse health effects are expected.

Region II has discussed this event with NMSS, and Region II will followup on this event during the week of July 25, 1994. The State of West Virginia has been informed.

This information is current as of 2:00 p.m. on July 20, 1994.

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