

## Media release

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### **Independent health study finds no strong evidence for a link between total radiation exposure at the Rössing mine and cancers studied**

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In 2015, the University of Manchester was appointed by Rio Tinto (the majority shareholder in Rössing Uranium Limited until 16 July 2019) to conduct an independent study to investigate the potential link between radiation and other occupational exposures and developing cancer in the workforce at the Rössing mine in Namibia.

Researchers from the University of Manchester conducted a case-cohort study, covering a representative sample of all employees who had worked at least one year at the mine between 1976 and 2010. The study considered workplace exposures to radiation at the Rössing mine, in addition to occupational exposures to silica, acid mist and diesel engine exhaust. The study compared occupational exposures for all cases in the Rössing workforce of five cancer types of interest (being lung, extra-thoracic airways (e.g. larynx), leukaemia, brain and kidney) with exposures for a representative sample of 1,148 people from the whole workforce.

The research team carried out statistical analyses to determine whether there are any relationships between occupational exposures (radiation, silica, acid mist, diesel engine exhaust) and the selected cancers of interest. These analyses showed that there is no strong evidence that total radiation exposure, or other exposures at the Rössing mine, have caused an increased risk of cancers in the workforce.

Further analyses by the research team showed associations between estimated gamma radiation and radioactive dust with lung cancer, but the associations were inconsistent, being present in some forms of analyses, but not in others. In these circumstances, no firm conclusion could be reached. Based on the data on radiation dose collected by Rössing, radiation exposure levels appear to be low in the Rössing mine. No evidence of carcinogenic effects at these levels has been found in other studies.



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