



staff photo by Irene Mees

A probing examination

David Hale, center, a graduate student in Zoology from San Antonio, helps freshman animal science majors Tim Stevenson, left, from Maryneal, and Rebecca Caffey, from Thorndale, dissect a frog.

Cancer, poverty studied

United Press International
BOSTON — Men who live in neighborhoods where poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, divorce and fragmented families are common run a high risk of dying of cancer, according to a study published Thursday.

Socio-economic conditions do not necessarily cause cancer in men, however, and have little or no effect on women, researchers said in the New England Journal of Medicine.

"I urge caution because I do not wish the observations to be construed as an argument that such socio-demographic conditions as poverty, crowded housing, divorce, and fragmented families cause or directly exacerbate cancer in men," said researcher C. David Jenkins of the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

He said the study of death certificates in Massachusetts may point out the important role "social connectedness and social supports" plays in survival, which can be prolonged by a regular life style.

Fragmented family structures may not be conducive to healthful patterns, he said.

"It could be that sharing one's life with other people increases the chances of maintaining regular patterns of eating and sleeping and of obtaining health care in a timely fashion," Jenkins said.

The high-risk living areas for men were distinguished by high percentages of families below the poverty level, widespread unemployment or underemployment and many large housing complexes of rented units averaging more than 1.5 persons per room.

He said few married couples lived in those high-risk areas, which had a disproportionately large percentage of divorced or separated men and women, widows and single people.

"The composition of a neighborhood with regard to marital status also has a strong association with deaths from cancer in men," Jenkins said.

Two "economically deprived" areas of Boston, where death rates were high overall, had cancer-related mortality rates in men 37 percent higher than the state average.

In women, mortality rates from cancer were equal to or below state-wide averages.

"These findings also call to mind the recent publications underscoring the links between stress, life disruption, and suppression of the immune response," Jenkins said.

Studies have linked a suppressed immune system to neoplasms, new and unusual growths that include tumors.

Stomach and intestinal cancer were most frequently associated

with the variables, Jenkins said. Lung cancer and cancer of the trachea and bronchus also had a high correlation.

Jenkins said he had "guarded feelings of excitement" about the findings because they indicate new directions for research.

Programs to find early signs

of cancer in men could be established in high-risk neighborhoods, he said.

"The findings may also suggest psycho-social processes that may provide new insights into the ways neoplasms develop and become lethal," he said.

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Past import restraints hurt Japanese automaker's gain

United Press International
DETROIT — Japanese automakers would have gained more than 25 percent of the U.S. car market, and Toyota likely would have snubbed any General Motors Corp. overture for a joint venture if there had been no import restraints in the past two years, a new report shows.

makers would have taken away 600,000 cars from American auto sales during the two-year period.

"There would have been less incentive for someone like Toyota to make a deal, although there would have been more incentive for someone like GM," said Chase Vice President William Pochiluk.

The two automakers recently decided on a joint car building

venture in the United States, and Japanese government officials agreed to a third year of import restraints, which limit the companies to 1.68 million autos. There is no limit on station wagons and trucks.

For the first two years — from April 1981 to March 1983 — Chase said the Japanese firms will end up with average sales of 1.8 million units per year and 21.6 percent of the market.

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