EFCOG Occupational Medical Director's Consensus Statement on Medical Surveillance for Nanoscience Researchers

Approved at the April 19, 2007 meeting.

The continuing development of novel engineered nanoparticles has raised the question of whether health monitoring (in general), medical surveillance (looking for specific effects), or establishment of a "nanoparticle worker registry" (to track for possible future health effects) is appropriate. To date, no human health effects have been causally associated with exposure to engineered nanoparticles, preventing the establishment of an evidence-based surveillance program. General health monitoring is common in DOE workplaces, and nanoparticle workers may be included in these programs for a variety of reasons. There is currently no evidence-based reason to create a "nanoparticle worker registry", as there is no basis for believing particles in this size range have delayed health effects, especially in a research setting.

Human subjects research consists of the prospective collection of data from humans to create generalizable knowledge. Given the lack of evidence that nanoparticles cause human health effects, testing that hypothesis likely constitutes human subjects research. The Department of Energy does sponsor research in human health effects, and may choose to conduct research to discover what, if any, human health effects are associated with nanoparticle exposure.