Defense Threat Reduction Agency
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DTRA-TR-06-21

TECHNICAL REPORT

Effects of Techa River Radiation Contamination on the Reproductive Function of Residents

October 2006

DTRA01-03-D-0022-0015

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYY)*	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)*
10-17-2006	Technical	Jan 2006 - Jun 2006

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Effects of Techa River Radiation Contamination on the Reproductive Function of Residents

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER DTRA01-03-D-0022

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A

6. AUTHOR(S)

M.M. Kosenko, L.A. Nikolayenko, S.B. Yepifanova, E.V. Ostroumova

5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A

5e. TASK NUMBER N/A

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

ITT Industries, Inc., Advanced Engineering & Sciences
2560 Huntington Avenue, Suite 500
Alexandria, VA 22303-1410

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

DTRA-TR-06-21

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

Defense Threat Reduction Agency
8725 John J. Kingman Road, MS-6201
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6201

10. SPONSORING/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)

DTRA

11. SPONSORING/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

DTRA-TR-06-21

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

This work was sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency under RDT&E RMSS Code B 4613

14. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)

Studies of the effects of radiation on reproductive function in large populations have revealed uncertain and sometimes contradictory results. Radiation from nuclear weapons has been implicated in transient amenorrhea, earlier menopause, and altered sex ratios in offspring but no difference from control populations with regard to fertility, spontaneous abortions, and stillbirth rates was noted. Russian studies of radiochemical plant employees exposed to external gamma radiation and incorporation of ^{239}Pu have shown unstable hypomenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, and, in chronic radiation syndrome (CRS) patients, increased spontaneous abortions but no effects on pregnancy or labor. This study reviews the effects of chronic external and internal radiation exposure on the populations living along the Techa River, including persons with CRS. Although delayed menarche was noted, earlier menopause was not, unlike in Japan. Sex ratios of offspring were altered, the direction depending upon whether the father or mother was irradiated. The statistical means for certain neonatal physical parameters (length, weight, head circumference) were not changed if the parents were irradiated, but deviations in both directions from the mean were associated with increased exposure. Congenital developmental defects of offspring of CRS patients were increased but not overall neonatal death rates.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

Chronic Radiation Syndrome   Radiation Effects   Developmental Abnormalities   Neonatal Death Rates

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE	17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	UNCLASSIFIED	SAR	68	M.M. Kosenko
					19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER *(Include area code)* N/A

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Sta Z39-18

Summary

Studies of the effects of radiation on reproductive function in large populations have revealed uncertain and sometimes contradictory results. Radiation from nuclear weapons has been implicated in transient amenorrhea, earlier menopause, and altered sex ratios in offspring but no difference from control populations with regard to fertility, spontaneous abortions, and stillbirth rates was noted. Russian studies of radiochemical plant employees exposed to external gamma radiation and incorporation of ^{239}Pu have shown unstable hypomenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, and, in chronic radiation syndrome (CRS) patients, increased spontaneous abortions but no effects on pregnancy or labor. This study reviews the effects of chronic external and internal radiation exposure on the populations living along the Techa River, including persons with CRS. Although delayed menarche was noted, earlier menopause was not, unlike in Japan. Sex ratios of offspring were altered, the direction depending upon whether the father or mother was irradiated. The statistical means for certain neonatal physical parameters (length, weight, head circumference) were not changed if the parents were irradiated, but deviations in both directions from the mean were associated with increased exposure. Congenital developmental defects of offspring of CRS patients were increased but not overall neonatal death rates.

CONVERSION TABLE

Conversion factors for U.S. Customary to metric (SI units of measurement)

MULTIPLY TO GET	BY BY	TO GET DIVIDE
angstrom	1.000 000 x E –10	meters (m)
atmosphere	1.013 25 x E +2	kilo pascal (kPa)
bar	1.000 000 x E +2	kilo pascal (kPa)
barn	1.000 000 x E –28	meter^2 (m^2)
British thermal unit (thermochemical)	1.054 350 x E +3	joule (J)
calorie (thermochemical)	4.184 000	joule (J)
cal (thermochemical)/cm^2	4.184 000 x E –2	mega joule/m^2 (MJ/m^2)
curie	3.7000 000 x E +1	giga becquerel (GBq)*
degree (angle)	1.745 329 x E –2	radian (rad)
degree Fahrenheit	tk = (t + 459.69)/1.8	degree kelvin (K)
electron volt	1.602 19 x E –19	joule (J)
erg	1.000 000 x E -7	joule (J)
erg/sec	1.000 000 x E -7	watt (W)
foot	3.048 000 x E –1	meter (M)
foot-pound-force	1.355 818	joule (J)
gallon (U.S. liquid)	3.785 412 x E –3	meter^3 (m^3)
inch	2.540 000 x E –2	meter (m)
jerk	1.000 000 x E +9	joule (J)
joule/kilogram (J/kg) (absorbed dose)	1.000 000	Gray (Gy)**
kilotons	4.183	terajoules
kip (1000 lbf)	4.448 222 x E +3	newton (N)
kip/inch^2 (ksi)	6.894 757 x E +3	kilo pascal (kPa)
ktap	1.000 000 x E +2	newton-second/m^2(N-s/m^2)
micron	1.000 000 x E –6	meter (m)
mil	2.540 000 x E –5	meter (m)
mile (international)	1.609 344 x E +3	meter (m)
ounce	2.834 952 x E –2	kilogram (kg)
pound-force (lbf avoirdupois)	4.448 222	newton (N)
pound-force inch	1.129 848 x E –1	newton-meter (N*m)
pound-force/inch	1.751 268 x E +2	newton-meter (N/m)
pound-force/foot^2	4.788 026 x E –2	kilo pascal (kPa)
pound-force/inch^2 (psi)	6.894 757	kilo pascal (kPa)
pound-mass (lbm avoirdupois)	4.535 924 x E –1	kilogram (kg)
pound-mass-foot^2 (moment of inertia)	4.214 011 x E –2	kilogram-meter^2 (kg*m^2)
pound-mass/foot^3	1.601 846 x E +1	kilogram/m^3 (kg/m^3)
rad (radiation absorbed dose) rem (roentgen equivalent man)	1.000 000 x E –2	Gray (Gy)** Sievert (Sv)***
roentgen	2.579 760 x E –4	coulomb/kilogram (C/kg)
shake	1.000 000 x E –8	second (s)
slug	1.459 390 x E +1	kilogram (kg)
torr (mm Hg, O oC)	1.333 22 x E -1	kilo pascal (kPa)

* The Becquerel is the SI unit of radioactivity: 1 Bq = 1 event/s.

** The Gray (Gy) is the SI unit of absorbed radiation.

*** The Sievert (Sv) is the SI unit of dose equivalent.

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Introduction

The reproductive function, on which the birth of viable offspring depends, includes a normally functioning parental endocrine system (especially the gonadal glands), marriage, conception, gestation, and delivery of healthy children.

The reproductive system is believed to be one of the body systems which shows the highest sensitivity to ionizing radiation. It is stated in the ICRP recommendations addressing deterministic radiation effects that exposure doses of 0.15 Gy to male gonads and of 0.65 Gy to female gonads may result in a transient sterility, while in acute exposure at doses of two to three Gy permanent sterility is observed [1].

Atrophy of ovaries associated with x-ray irradiation at significant doses was registered in experimental studies as early as the beginning of the 20th century [2]. More recent elaborate experiments in animals and clinical observations in humans have clearly demonstrated that ionizing radiation causes degenerative and atrophic changes in the genital glands. Similar to primary ovarian follicles, the spermatogenic epithelium consists of actively dividing cells, and this feature of the tissues pre-determines the prevalence of direct effects of radiation injury, proportional to exposure rates.

Genetic radiation effects associated with mutations in germinal tissue cells lead to an increase in the number of individuals with chromosome and gene pathology among the offspring of exposed parents. Registration of genotypic manifestations of this pathology presents considerable difficulties both because of the complexity of the methods, and the need to detect appearance of rare conditions in a numerically limited population composed of the offspring of exposed residents. That is why, in order to be able to form an idea about the injury to the reproductive function inflicted by radiation exposure, the "phylogenetic approach" is most commonly taken, i.e., recourse is made to the analysis of the phenotypic manifestations of the pathologic condition.

Data on the natural incidence of such pathologic conditions as well as risk associated with radiation exposure are cited in the reviews of UNSCEAR [3, 4]. The natural incidence of autosomal dominant and x-linked diseases has been estimated as one case per 100 neonates, i.e., one percent. In radiation exposure the incidence increases proportionally to the exposure dose. The exposure effect of ten mSv (one rem) was found to account for 15-20 excess cases per one million neonates in the first generation. It means that six excess cases of diseases associated with autosomal dominant and x-linked diseases can be expected to occur in the offspring cohort numbering 10,000, at parental gonadal doses approaching 300 mGy.

The spontaneous incidence of recessive diseases was estimated as 11 cases per 10,000 neonates. However, recurring recessive mutations do not become manifested in case of heterozygosis; the risk of recessive disease occurrence is small in connection with radiation exposure.

The frequency of chromosome abnormalities among infants born alive is 0.4-0.6%. Sufficiently clear-cut diagnostic criteria have now been established for most common chromosome diseases: Down's syndrome, Kleinfelter's syndrome, Shereshevsky-Turner syndrome, X trisomy. The process of chromosome dysjunction is rather sensitive to ionizing radiation. If we assume that exposure at the dose of ten mSv (one rem) can lead to the occurrence of 20 additional cases of chromosome diseases per one million newborns, we should expect six additional disease cases in the offspring of ten thousand parents with a gonadal dose of 300 mSv.

A low incidence of genetic effects in a numerically limited cohort comprising offspring of exposed parents, and the unlikelihood of their being detected on the basis of natural prevalence of these diseases, makes us resort to the study of conditions characterized by a higher prevalence and a lesser mutational component, e.g., such pathological conditions as spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, early antenatal death, birth of children with developmental defects. These diseases can be defined as multifactorial pathology, often of an unidentified etiology. It is exceedingly difficult to classify their causes among genetic and environmental factors.

Nevertheless, a number of authors assume that about 50% of spontaneous abortions are due to genetic causes [5]. In the structure of causes responsible for stillbirth, congenital developmental defects may account for 7.5%. In the structure of causative factors of early neonatal death, congenital developmental defects may account for 14% [6]. According to the opinion expressed by some researchers, the incidence of birth of children with developmental defects provides a basis for assessment of intensity of the mutational processes [5, 7]. Diseases assigned to the category of developmental defects or congenital abnormalities represent a group of multifactorial diseases. The incidence of these diseases is nine percent based on the British Columbia Registry, and six percent according to data from North Ireland. Currently, it is assumed that the mutational component of these diseases makes up five percent [3]; however, some authors assume it to be much higher, up to 60% [8, 9].

The researchers of the Institute for General Genetics [10, 11], Russia, have demonstrated the feasibility for genetic monitoring based on morphogenetic signs, in particular the analysis of anthropomorphic signs in newborns. During the prevailing influence of a mutation it is likely that the balanced process will be transformed into a vectorized genetic one; thus deformation of the usual normal distributions will likely be observed.

In addition to the methods listed above some researchers [12] consider that one of the informative methods for radiation-related genetic effects is measuring the sex ratio of the offspring of exposed persons.

A considerable contribution to the understanding of radiation-induced injury sustained by the reproductive system resulted from the follow-up of a cohort comprising female survivors of atomic bombardment in Hiroshima and Nagasaki [13, 14]. It was established that the incidence of transient amenorrhea following radiation exposure was inversely proportional to the distance from the hypocenter of the explosion. The higher the exposure dose to ovaries the younger was the age at menopause. However, no difference was noted between the exposed and control populations with regard to fertility, spontaneous abortions, and stillbirth rates.

A number of Russian authors described the status of genital organs among women radiologists and radiochemical plant employees exposed to external gamma-radiation along with incorporation of ^{239}Pu [15-17]. Chronic irradiation at aggregate doses of less than four Gy led to an increased incidence of unstable hypo- and oligomenorrhea, but it did not affect the course of pregnancy and labor. Women who developed chronic radiation sickness were noted to have spontaneous abortions with higher frequency.

Studies on the incidence of intrauterine fetal loss and analysis of sex ratio were performed for children born to A-bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki [18]. These studies did not disclose any differences between the exposed and control populations in the rates of stillbirth, neonatal death, or congenital abnormalities in neonates. However, an increased rate of birth of children with small head size and delayed mental development was noted in cases when acute exposure occurred between weeks 10-18 of gestation [19, 20]. An absolute increase of over four percent in the numerical sex ratio for offspring of A-bomb survivors was noted in case the father was exposed, and an absolute increase in the numerical sex ratio of over 1.6% was noted in case the mothers were exposed [21]. On the basis of studies on death rates for children of A-bomb survivors a calculation of the minimum gamete doubling-dose was made for mutations causing death during the first 17 years of life. It was estimated as 460 mSv for exposed fathers, and 1.25 Sv for exposed mothers [22].

In our earlier studies addressing the status of reproductive function for the population of the South Urals we analyzed the outcomes of 2,460 pregnancies for exposed and unexposed persons [23] on the basis of retrospective data from obstetric histories. However, these studies did not involve analysis of the group encompassing patients with chronic radiation sickness (CRS).

Thus, an overview of literature data shows that the number of clinical and epidemiological follow-up studies focusing on the post-exposure status of reproductive function is small, and the results are rather contradicting. All the foregoing stresses the expediency of studies aiming at assessment of chronic radiation effects on reproductive function in Techa riverside residents exposed to a wide range of doses as well as in patients with chronic radiation sickness.

The authors are grateful to Dr. John Ainsworth and Dr. Glen Reeves for fruitful discussion and support of this work. Funding and contractual management support for the production and publication of this report was provided by DTRA. The authors are indebted to Dr. Paul K. Blake, Nuclear Test Personnel Review Program, DTRA, who consistently supported the production of these reports. The agency is grateful for the report production and technical editing provided by Chris Brahmstedt of the Defense Threat Reduction Information Analysis Center (DTRIAC), as well as the valuable technical contributions and suggestions provided by William Billado and Don Alderson of DTRIAC for this report.

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Section 1.0 Follow-up Cohort and Methods of Study

1.1 A Brief Characterization of Radiation Conditions in Villages on the Techa and Estimates of Gonadal Doses for Residents

Radiation conditions in the Techa riverside villages were described in detail in previous publications [24-26]. In the present report it was deemed necessary to dwell on certain aspects of gonadal dose estimation for exposed residents.

Radiation exposure of the Techa riverside residents occurred as a result of the operation since 1948 of a military plutonium processing plant located within 100 km of Chelyabinsk city in the Urals. In the early period (1949-1956) of the facility's operation the problem of radioactive waste disposal was not solved; thus, high- and medium-level wastes from the radiochemical plant were dumped into the Techa-Iset-Tobol river system. During this period 7.6×10^{7} m^3 liquid wastes with a total activity of 10^{17} Bq (2.75×10^{6} Ci) were discharged into the river. The combined contents of ^{89}Sr and ^{90}Sr accounted for 20.4%, and that of ^{137}Cs for 12.2%, of the overall isotope composition of the released wastes. About 95% of the total activity was released into the river in the period from March 1950 to November 1951. The average daily discharge rate was estimated to be 1.6×10^{14} Bq (4,300 Ci) during that period.

At the time of radioactive waste discharges 39 villages with a total population of 26,500 were located on the banks of the Techa all the way to its discharge into the Iset. The population had not been warned about the radioactive waste discharges into the river, and a large proportion of residents were using river water for drinking, cooking and other domestic needs.

It is due to these circumstances that the residents of the Techa riverside were exposed to both external and internal radiation. External radiation is attributed to a high gamma-background on the river banks, in the villages, and inside houses. Internal radiation resulted from consumption of river water and foodstuffs produced in the area. Internal exposure doses accumulated due to body intakes of osteotropic radionuclides of strontium, and uniformly distributed ^{137}Cs .

1.2 Gonadal Doses

The focus of the present work, which analyzes the reproductive function in exposed residents, will be on doses to genital organs which resulted from exposure to external gamma-radiation and incorporated ^{137}Cs. The doses were estimated by the researchers of the Biophysics laboratory of the Urals Research Center for Radiation (URCRM).

External exposure doses were formed due to gamma-emitting radionuclides (^{137}Cs, ^{95}Zr, ^{95}Nb, ^{106}Ru) present in the effluents contaminating the river water, bottom sediments, and flood-plains along the Techa [24]. The basic data used in external exposure dose reconstruction were the following:

- information on total activity, dynamics, and radionuclide composition of discharges;
- data from measuring specific activity of bottom deposits;
- results of direct measurements of air exposure dose rates in the

high-water basin and residential areas;

- life style patterns for different age groups of riverside residents, i.e., the estimation of periods of time spent at different contaminated sites.

It should be pointed out that measurements of exposure dose rates were not conducted until 1951 in the upper reaches of the river, and not until 1952 over the entire course of the river. The reconstruction of gamma-fields for the years 1950 and 1951 all over the course of the river was based on data from measuring specific activity of river water, total activity, dynamics, and radionuclide composition of the waste discharged. “Life styles,” defined as average periods of time spent by residents of riverside villages at sites with different exposure dose rates, were calculated by Prof. M.M. Saurov in the 1960s. The major contribution to the external exposure dose resulted from a stay, even if brief, in the contaminated flood-plain area at the water edge, since on the streets of the settlements the gamma-background was 50-150 times lower. It was assumed that, on the average, children and adolescents spent two hours a day, and adults only one hour a day, at the river. The process of dose accumulation due to external exposure actually stopped after 1956 when the residents of the upper Techa were re-settled, and in the rest of the villages the contaminated flood-plains were fenced off. Annual doses from external exposure for residents of the riverside area assigned to different age groups are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Annual External Exposure Doses in the Periods 1950-1951 and 1952-1956 (mGy/yr).

Villages	1950-1951 Children Born in 1944-1950	1950-1951 Adolescents Born in 1935-1943	1950-1951 Adults Born Before 1935	1952-1956 Children Born in 1944-1950	1952-1956 Adolescents Born in 1935-1943	1952-1956 Adults Born Before 1935
Metlino	410	810	390	63	130	60
Techa-Brod	390	760	360	58	120	54
Asanovo	270	550	260	42	84	40
Nadyrovo	130	250	120	19	39	13
Muslyumovo	17	34	16	4	8	3
Brodokalmak	7	14	7	2	4	2.5
Russkaya Techa	4	8	4	2	4	2
N. Petropavlovka	4	8	4	2	4	2
Villages in Kurgan Region	3.5	6	3	1.5	3	1.5

Average doses from external exposure, as shown by calculations, are a function of the distance along the river from the discharge site. The highest doses of external exposure were received by the residents of Metlino, whose average-for-group doses in 1951 were 0.50-1.0 Gy/yr. In the lower reaches of the Techa on the territory of Kurgan Region (150 km from the discharge site) external exposure doses did not exceed 0.01 Gy/yr even in the period of the heaviest discharges (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2. Average Doses of External Exposure (mGy) for Residents of Villages Along the Techa River.

Villages	Distance from discharge site (km)	External exposure
Metlino	7	1,220
Techa Brod	18	1,130
Asanovo & Nazarovo	33	860
M.Taskino	41	710
Gerasimovka	43	570
Nadyrov Most	48	370
Nadyrovo	50	380
Ibragimovo	54	280
Issayevo	60	190
Subsidiary Farm	65	130
Muslyumovo	78	68
Kurmanovo	88	39
Karpino	96	31
Zamanikha	100	29
Vetroduika	105	26
Brodokalmak	109	28
Osolodka	125	18
Panovo	128	22
Cherepanovo	137	18
Russkaya Techa	138	22
Baklanovo	141	18
N. Petropavlovka	148	21
2-Beloyarka	155	20
Lobanovo	163	20
Anchugovo	170	20
Verkhnyaya Techa	176	20
Skilyagino	180	20
Bugayevo	186	20
Dubasovo	200	20
Biserovo	202	20
Shutikha	203	20
Progress	207	20
Pershino	212	20
Ganino and Markovo	215	20
Klyuchi	223	20

The rates of ^{137}Cs body intakes were calculated with allowance made for variations in the radionuclide composition of river water with distance from the discharge site. Dose calculations were made using the "average-for-group values" approach. It was assumed that the dynamics of dose accumulation was the same (average-for-group) for all persons of a specific age living in the same specific village in the same specific year. The intakes of radionuclides for the period 1950 through 1959 were taken into account. The contribution of the intake of the first decade to the total dose constituted 99.8%, which is why it was deemed logical to ignore the intake of radionuclides after 1959. The village of Muslyumovo was used as a reference village for estimating the annual intake for the rest of the villages on the river [24] (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3. Coefficients for Internal Exposure Dose Recalculation for Different Villages vs. the Reference Village Muslyumovo.

Name of Village	Coefficient of Re-calculation	Name of Village	Coefficient of Re-calculation
Metlino	0.76	Cherepanovo	0.42
Techa Brod	0.26	Russkaya Techa	0.38
Assanovo & Nazarovo	0.76	Baklanovo	0.11
M. Taskino	0.73	N. Petropavlovka	0.49
Gerasimovka	0.80	2-Beloyarka	0.54
Nadyrov Most	0.59	Lobanovo	0.38
Nadyrovo	1.04	Anchugovo	0.45
Ibragimovo	1.04	Verkhnyaya Techa	0.50
Isayevo	0.73	Skilyagino	0.71
Subsidiary Farm	0.95	Bugayevo	0.43
Muslyumovo	1.00	Dubasovo	0.26
Kurmanovo	0.62	Biserovo	0.45
Karpino	0.82	Shutikha	0.12
Zamanikha	0.60	Progress	0.28
Vetroduika	0.76	Pershino	0.24
Brodokalmak	0.21	Ganino and Markovo	0.20
Osolodka	0.60	Klyuchi	0.11
Panovo	0.66	Zatecha	0.29

The doses from incorporated ^{137}Cs were calculated using the age-dependent metabolism model described in ICRP Publication 56 [27]. The calculations were made using the "average-for-group values" approach. Annual internal doses to gonads for different age groups of the Muslyumovo population in the period 1950-1954 are presented in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. Annual Internal Exposure Doses to Gonads Received by Muslyumovo Residents Assigned to Different Age Cohorts in the Period 1950-1954 (mGy/yr).

Calendar Year	Year of Birth					
	1930 and Older	1931-1935	1936-1940	1941-1945	1946-1949	1950
1950	25	26	31	24	10	5
1951	20	19	18	12	6	4
1952	10	9	9	9	7	6
1953	4	4	4	3	2	2
1954	1	1	1	1	1	1

Calculations of doses by year were made. The year of termination of follow-up or death was considered to be the cut-off year for dose accumulation.

Table 1.5 demonstrates the average values of doses to gonads calculated for the residents of each village [26].

There is a wide range of variations of average doses to gonads in different settlements: from 21 mSv to 1,270 mSv. It should be noted that it is difficult to estimate the uncertainty of dose, even though this is very significant. This feature can be attributed to the lack of data on gamma-fields for the years 1949-1950, when no measurements of gamma-fields were performed, and to the fact that "life style patterns" typical of the different age groups have not been identified accurately.

Table 1.5. Average Organ-Absorbed Doses (mGy), External and Internal, for Residents of the Techa River Villages.

Village	Population, n	External Exposure	Internal Exposure	Gonadal Dose	Doses to Bone Surfaces
Metlino	1,242	1,220	50	1,270	2,260
Techa Brod	75	1,130	20	1,150	1,480
Asanovo and Nazarovo	898	860	40	900	1,900
M.Taskino	147	710	40	750	1,680
Gerasimovka	357	570	20	590	1,630
Nadyrov Most	240	370	40	410	1,220
Nadyrovo	184	380	60	440	1,180
Ibragimovo	184	280	60	340	1,800
Isayevo	434	190	40	230	1,700
Podsobnoye Khoz.	487	130	40	170	1,190
Muslyumovo	3,230	68	52	120	1,410
Kurmanovo	1,046	39	36	75	1,430
Karpino	195	31	47	78	880
Zamanikha	338	29	34	63	1,150

Table 1.5. Continued

Village	Population, n	External Exposure	Internal Exposure	Gonadal Dose	Doses to Bone Surfaces
Vetroduyika	163	26	47	71	1,060
Brodokalmak	4,102	28	5	33	310
Osolodka	362	18	31	49	830
Panovo	129	22	35	57	910
Cherepanovo	222	18	22	40	590
Russkaya Techa	1,472	22	15	37	530
Baklanovo	480	18	3	21	170
N.Petropavlovka	919	21	22	43	680
2-Beloyarka	386	20	26	46	750
Lobanovo	626	20	17	37	530
Anchugovo	1,093	20	21	41	630
Verkhnyaya Techa	979	20	24	44	700
Skilyagino	492	20	38	58	900
Bugayevo	1,074	20	20	40	600
Dubasovo	703	20	10	30	370
Biserovo	465	20	21	41	630
Shutikha	1,109	20	2	22	180
Progress	205	20	11	31	400
Pershino	1,143	20	9	29	340
Ganino and Markovo	220	20	7	27	290
Klyuchi	1,309	20	1	21	170
Zatecha	1,135	20	12	32	400

1.3 Doses to Other Organs and Fetus

Table 1.5 presented above shows dose values to bone surfaces too. This parameter should be taken into account in reproductive function evaluation because of the involvement of the hypophysis in the endocrine regulation of sexual development. Plutonium incorporation in the bone surfaces of the sella turcica, which encloses the hypophysis, predetermines the possibility of direct irradiation of the endocrine tissue. The doses to bone surfaces exceed significantly the doses to gonads, but there is a certain parallelism between them.

The radiation exposure which was observed in the Techa riverside villages was of a complex nature. Chronic exposure of the population resulted from:

- external exposure which was going on during the first six years, the highest dose rates being observed in the period 1950-1952;
- internal exposure during the period of radionuclide incorporation from the water and locally produced foodstuffs (late 1949-1956);
- internal exposure due to incorporation into the body of strontium

and cesium radionuclides, which have a long half-life of excretion.

In view of the foregoing the analysis of health status for the offspring should involve not only parental gonadal doses but the factor of antenatal exposure as well, in case gestation coincided with the period of highest exposure dose rates, i.e., in 1950-1952.

In calculating doses to the fetus allowance was made for the dose received by the mother due to external radiation exposure and radiation exposure from ^{137}Cs during the year of pregnancy. According to preliminary data the average dose to the fetus was estimated as 38 mSv [28].

1.4 Sampling of Dose Groups for Reproductive Function Evaluation

In order to assess the significance of deviations of this or that parameter vs. radiation exposure, the dose-effect method was used. We tried to adhere to this principle in sampling study groups among patients with CRS and exposed population on the basis of doses to the gonads: <50, 50-99, 100-149, 150-199, 200-299, 400-1,000, >1,000 mSv. However, the analysis of dose-effect dependence for such rare phenomena as neonatal death rate, congenital abnormalities, etc., could only be made if larger (merged) groups were used.

One more approach to radiation effect analysis was to study the reproductive function parameters using separate groups of children in which mother only, father only, or both parents were exposed, in accordance with the recommendations of the ICRP. In cases where both parents were exposed their gonadal doses were added.

1.5 Cohorts Studied and Methods of Study: Cohort Studied

The goal of the present study is to investigate the reproductive function in patients with the diagnosis of chronic radiation sickness (CRS). In all, 940 exposed residents of the Techa riverside area were diagnosed with CRS. A detailed description of CRS patients (annual dose rates, cumulative doses to the red bone marrow, clinical symptoms of the disease, course and outcomes of CRS) was described in prior reports [29, 30]. The clinical manifestations of CRS included: hematological syndrome which in some patients makes itself evident as moderate bone marrow hypoplasia, and as decreased counts of leukocytes, neutrophils and thrombocytes in the peripheral blood; CNS affection syndrome; neurological syndrome manifested by asthenization (weakness), disturbed vascular regulation, vertebrogenic disorders and, less frequently, by diffuse micro-necrotic changes in the myelin membranes of the conductors; and neuroendocrinal disorders.

There were 326 male and 614 female patients with CRS. They were of different ages by the time the diagnosis of CRS was made: 156 individuals were aged 50 years and older, i.e., they had attained the age at which the reproductive function is on the decline. It was thought important to examine subjects of younger ages whose sexual development and sexual maturity coincided with the period of considerable exposure rates. Age and sex distribution of patients with CRS is presented in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6. Age and Sex Distribution of Patients with CRS.

Age (yrs) at Start of Exposure (by 1950)	Men		Women	
	# of Cases	%	# of Cases	%
31 and Older	109	11.6	315	33.5
30-21	49	5.2	123	13.1
20-11	85	9.0	113	12.0
10 and Younger	83	8.8	63	6.7

In addressing the epidemiological tasks (analyzing marriage coefficients, assessment of birth rates, etc.) an attempt was made to analyze the effects for the entire CRS cohort. However, this goal was not achieved in full measure, since, as is described in the report [30], some members of the cohort migrated. Thus, they were lost to follow-up, and therefore data on their marital and family history are not available. The analysis of the clinical parameters (establishment and extinction of menstrual function, diseases of the reproductive system organs, etc.) was based on a cohort including a representative sample selected among CRS patients.

1.6 Comparison Groups

One of the key tasks involved in any research of radiation effects is sampling from a suitable comparison group. Theoretically, preference should be given to unexposed contingents matching the study cohort in terms of age, gender, methods and period of follow-up. Unfortunately, there isn't a population group which has been examined over the 45-year period with the same periodicity (frequency) as the group of patients with CRS.

In view of the foregoing different comparison groups were sampled by us to allow an analysis of different parameters characterizing the reproductive function:

- In a number of cases the parameters studied were compared to those registered before exposure;
- In some sections of the present report the cohort of people who were exposed on the Techa but did not develop CRS is referred to as a comparison group. The group in question numbers 25,497 subjects. The members of this group are compatible with the CRS cohort in terms of gender, residence history, and exposure conditions. However, patients with CRS were slightly different from non-CRS individuals in terms of age; besides, patients with CRS were examined with higher periodicity;
- The comparison group used in analyzing outcomes of labor is based on interviews of women who came to live in the Techa riverside area after 1952, i.e., when radiation conditions had significantly improved; gonadal doses did not exceed ten mSv for these residents (late entrants). In subsequent years the late entrants lived in the same conditions as exposed residents, and were followed-up at the URCRM clinic;

- Moreover, some sections describing epidemiological parameters present data on unexposed individuals living in the same administrative districts as exposed persons (regional control).

1.7 Research Methods

The reproductive system is characterised by multiple levels of functioning. The process of reproduction includes maturation of sex cells, impregnation, intrauterine development of the embryo, birth of the child. The analysis of the reproductive function should, naturally, include the above-listed stages. For this reason, the present study aimed at evaluation of effects of chronic irradiation and development of chronic radiation sickness on the process of reproduction, includes analysis of the following parameters and body functions:

- genital organs morbidity
- menstrual function
- marriage coefficient
- incidence of childless marriages and analysis of their causative factors
- course of pregnancy
- unfavourable outcomes of pregnancy
- rate of fecundity
- sex ratio of the offspring
- health status of neonates
- death rate of the offspring.

The next section presents a description of the methods used for analyzing individual parameters listed above.

1.8 Genital Organs Morbidity

Morbidity of genital organs, endocrine pathology, and toxic effects resulting in impaired maturation and deranged function of sex cells, are the most common causes of infertility.

A number of neuroendocrine glands, other than the genital, influence the process of sex cell maturation: the hypothalamic area of the brain, pituitary gland, thyroid, and adrenal glands. Apart from exposure to radiation, infertility may be caused by some occupational toxic factors, immune disorders, or endocrine disorders which result in deranged process of ovulation. Secondary infertility may rather frequently be associated with inflammatory processes in the genital glands and sexually transmitted communicable diseases. In view of these features identification of the causes leading to infertility presents a fairly difficult task.

In current clinical surroundings a method of choice used to investigate the causes of infertility is evaluation of the hormonal status, particularly that of estrogens, both total level of estrogen and its fractions: estradiol, estrone, estriol. However, in the 1950s (the period characterized by maximum dose rates) our clinic, whose task it was to follow up patients with CRS, had no appropriate facilities for conducting hormonal studies. We can judge on the adequacy or inadequacy of sex hormone production, and maturation of follicles, indirectly, on the basis of follow-up of the menstrual cycle.

Male infertility may result from the following causes: exposure to radiation, chemicals, salts of heavy metals, along with androgen deficiency, chromosomal diseases (Klinefelter's syndrome), diseases of the testes (cryptorchidism, orchitis), disturbed function of the prostate gland (prostatitis), sexual dysfunction (impotence), or chronic general somatic diseases such as diseases of the respiratory organs (bronchiectasis), diabetes, hepatic, and renal insufficiency. The method of choice used to identify the causes of male infertility is to study the sperm. Unfortunately, such investigations were not performed in the 1950s and 1960s at the clinic where CRS patients were observed.

The study of genitourinary system morbidity was based on information resulting from multiple years of follow-up conducted by the clinical department of the Urals Research Center for Radiation Medicine (URCRM) for people exposed along the Techa, including those who were diagnosed with chronic radiation sickness. On the basis of follow-up data and diagnoses established as a result of examinations a computer file <DIAGNOSIS> was created in the URCRM's data base. The file <DIAGNOSIS> contains 167,731 entries based on diagnosis, including data on 126,457 cases of diseases diagnosed over the 40-year follow-up in residents exposed on the Techa. Cases of genitourinary system disorders (ICD Class 10) were selected among patients with CRS [31].

1.9 Menstrual Function

We can form an opinion on the adequacy of sex hormones production and follicle maturation on the basis of indirect evidence resulting from studies of the menstrual cycle. In an effort to collect data on gynecological history, including the menstrual cycle, a special questionnaire was developed. In the period 1985-1989 787 exposed women were interviewed using the questionnaire, including 126 women with CRS. Information on age at menarche and at menopause, duration of the menstrual cycle, pains, and quantity of discharge, was collected and recorded by the gynecologists.

1.10 Course and Outcomes of Pregnancies

Information on the course of pregnancies and labor were collected from different sources:

1) Labor histories: registration form No. 96 approved by the USSR's Health Ministry. 1,219 labor histories were received from:

a) the maternity department of the village hospital in Muslyumovo;

b) the maternity home of the central district hospital in Kunashak.

Labor histories were collected for the period 1956-1973. The maternity department of the Muslyumovo hospital primarily admitted radiation-exposed women from the village of Muslyumovo. The Kunashak maternity home primarily admitted radiation-exposed women from the village of Kurmanovo and primarily unexposed women from the villages of Kunashak, Borisovo, Sultanovo, Nugumanovo, Surakovo, Sarino, Aminyevo, Maly Kunashak. On the whole, labor histories are available for 662 exposed women (including 39 women diagnosed with CRS) and 557 unexposed women.

Labor histories contain entries on the current pregnancy, course of pregnancy, and also information obtained by interviewing women about previous pregnancies; in all, labor histories contain 6,600 entries on prior and current pregnancies.

2) Interviews of 872 exposed women, including 129 women with diagnosed CRS, were conducted by gynecologists in the period 1985-1989. Interviews were conducted on the basis of a specifically designed questionnaire containing questions on gynecological history, sexual relations, courses and outcomes of pregnancy and labor. The questionnaires completed by women contain information on 6,996 pregnancies which occurred both among exposed women from the Techa cohort and women who settled in the Techa area after 1952 (internal control).

Labor histories and questionnaires provided information on the outcomes of 13,500 pregnancies, of which 12,000 occurred in exposed and 1,500 in unexposed (control) women. There were, also, 55 entries on the course of pregnancies in control (unexposed) women whose husbands were exposed. Because of the small size of the latter group it was deemed pointless to analyze these data.

As a result of linking the information from the two above-indicated sources it became evident that information on 96 women was available both in labor histories and responses to questionnaires.

Both of the methods used for collecting information have their advantages and disadvantages. The records contained in labor histories are closer in terms of time to the start of radiation exposure, more significant for analyses of outcomes of pregnancy and labor, and more reliable in terms of registration of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes. This information allows the formation of a control (unexposed) group. However, all this information relates to women who were exposed in the villages of Muslyumovo and Kurmanovo, and who actually received equal cumulative doses to the gonads. This feature does not allow eliciting of dose-dependence of the effect studied.

The interview method covers the analysis of pregnancy outcomes for women from different populated areas for a long period of time, which allows tracing the dose-dependence of the parameters analyzed. However, it cannot be denied that a considerable proportion of relevant information is misrepresented in the process of interviewing the women about past events. It should be taken into account that the use of the interview method may result in a certain number of both false-positive and false-negative diagnoses, though the method does have some value [33].

In view of the foregoing, analysis of a number of parameters, such as pregnancy complications, course of labor, and pathological labor, was carried out in this study on the basis of case histories alone. Data from the interviews were used to estimate the number of abortions.

1.11 Health Status in Neonates

Information on health status of newborn children was obtained from the following sources:

1. Newborn development history (registration form No. 97 introduced by the USSR's Health Ministry). As a rule, the newborn development histories which were attached to labor histories were obtained from the maternity homes of Muslyumovo and Kunashak, and abstracted. The newborn

development histories contained information on hereditary factors both on the maternal and paternal side, labor traumas, developmental defects and deformities, diseases of newborns, prematurity, body weight and length, head circumference, and neonatal health status diary covering the period spent at the maternity home. This source provided information on 3,360 newborns, including 128 children born to women diagnosed with CRS.

2. Interviews of exposed women conducted by gynecologists and focusing on the health status of the newborn children: date of birth, gender, weight, body length, circumference of head and chest, single or multiple pregnancy, live- or stillborn, early neonatal death, and the child's development during the first year of life. On the basis of these interview data the health status of 1,982 newborns was studied, including that of 238 children born to women with CRS.
3. Birth certificates which were retrieved from the Civil Registrar's Office (ZAGS) archives, which contained entries on stillbirth.

1.12 Marriage Coefficient, Number of Children Per Family

Information on marriages for exposed persons with CRS and on birth of children in families was retrieved from the URCRM's computerized database <MAN>, which contains medical and dosimetric data on exposed persons and their offspring. The database includes a "family units" file, which was created as a result of fusion of the exposed cohort and offspring file on the basis of family connections. A family identification number unifying the system numbers of spouses and their children was introduced. A Techa cohort member may appear as a member of two families: in one of them as a child, and in the other as a spouse. Such structuring of the database allows prompt identification of married or unmarried persons, and those with or without children.

The offspring file included in the URCRM's database allows identification of the number of children representing the offspring of persons with CRS, and calculate the fertility and sex ratio for the offspring.

1.13 Death Rate Among Offspring

Death rate among the offspring was estimated on the basis of death certificates obtained from the regional ZAGS archives. According to regulations death certificates should be stored for 75 years. A death certificate is used for registering a death case and contains information on the person's last name, first name, patronymic, birth date, birth place, occupation, death date, death place, and cause of death. Death certificates are copied, and the causes of death are coded according to ICD-9. Complete information from the death certificates is being transferred to the computer file of the URCRM's database. Death cases among the offspring of exposed parents (parents with CRS in particular) were picked out from the computer file.

Section 2.0 Analysis of Genitourinary System Disorders

The <DIAGNOSIS> file for pathological conditions of all types in the URCRM database includes data on 126,457 cases of diseases diagnosed over the 40-year period of follow-up among residents of the Techa riverside villages. Of this number 22,732 cases were registered among 940 patients with CRS, and 103,725 among 12,437 followed-up exposed residents without CRS.

Diseases of the genitourinary system are assigned to ICD 9 Class 10, which includes disorders of both the urinary and genital systems.

Information on the fraction of genitourinary system disorders for CRS patients and exposed persons without CRS are presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Incidence of Genitourinary System Disorders Among Exposed Persons with and without CRS.

Characteristics	Exposed Persons with CRS	Exposed Persons
Total subjects	940	12,437
Total Registered Disease Cases	22,732	103,725
Total ICD 9 Class 10 Diseases	1,113	5,223
% of Class 10 Diseases Among All Disease Classes	4.90	5.04
Incidence of Class 10 Diseases per 1,000 Persons	1,184.0	420.0

It can be seen that 1,113 cases of genitourinary tract disorders were diagnosed among patients with CRS and 5,223 cases occurred among exposed residents without CRS. The calculation of disease rate per 1,000 followed-up members of these groups yielded significantly different coefficients; the disease rate was significantly higher for patients with CRS. However, there are no grounds to assume this difference is due to the influence of radiation exposure and CRS. As was stated above (Section 1.0), patients with CRS were examined more regularly, they were summoned to the clinic to be examined and treated, a feature which, in all evidence, may have resulted in higher values of Class 10 disease rate observed at our clinic among CRS patients. The latter supposition can be confirmed by the following two facts. The first one is an equal contribution (about 5%) of genitourinary pathology to total diseases observed in both groups: patients with CRS and exposed individuals without CRS. The second circumstance which should be taken into account is that while 100% of patients with CRS underwent medical examinations, only 12,500 out of 25,000 (50%) of exposed persons were examined. This implies that the exposed cohort cannot serve as an adequate control for the CRS cohort in a study aimed at analyzing disease incidence.

The structure of genitourinary diseases for male and female patients with CRS is presented in Tables 2.2 and 2.3.

Table 2.2. Structure of Genitourinary Pathology for Male Patients with CRS.

Genitourinary Pathology, ICD Codes	Number of Cases	Incidence/1,000
Nephritis, nephrosis (580-589)	2	6.13
Infections and calculi of the urinary system (590-599)	38	116.56
Hyperplasia of the prostate (600)	42	128.83
Other disorders of the prostate (601-602)	6	18.40
Orchitis and epidydymitis (603-604)	8	24.54
Infertility (606)	0	0
Other disorders of male genital organs (607-608)	0	0
Total	96	294.48

For men the main proportion of urinary tract diseases was represented by inflammatory disorders of the urinary tract, and the majority of these by urinary tract infections. Strictly speaking, 56 cases of genital system diseases were registered, 42 being diagnosed as prostate hypertrophy in elderly men. There were 14 cases of diseases which can potentially be of interest in male infertility studies. Among them there were six cases of prostatitis and eight cases of epidydymitis. The incidence of orchitis and epidydymitis occurring at different gonadal doses is shown in Figure 1. It can be observed that the rate of these inflammatory pathologies is independent of dose.

No cases of infertility as a clinical entity (ICD rubric 606, Class 10) were registered among the studied population.

Table 2.3. Structure of Genitourinary Pathology for Female Patients with CRS.

Diseases of Genitourinary system, ICD codes	Number of Cases	Incidence/1,000
Nephritis, nephrosis (580-589)	15	24.43

Table 2.3. Continued

Diseases of Genitourinary System, ICD codes	Number of Cases	Incidence/1,000
Infections and calculi of the urinary system (590-599)	172	280.13
Breast pathology (610-611)	6	9.77
Inflammatory disease, endometriosis (614-619)	348	566.77
Non-inflammatory disorders (620-625)	226	368.08
Disorders of menstruation (626-627)	205	333.88
Infertility (628)	45	73.29
Other disorders of female genital organs (629)	0	0
Total	1,017	1,656.35

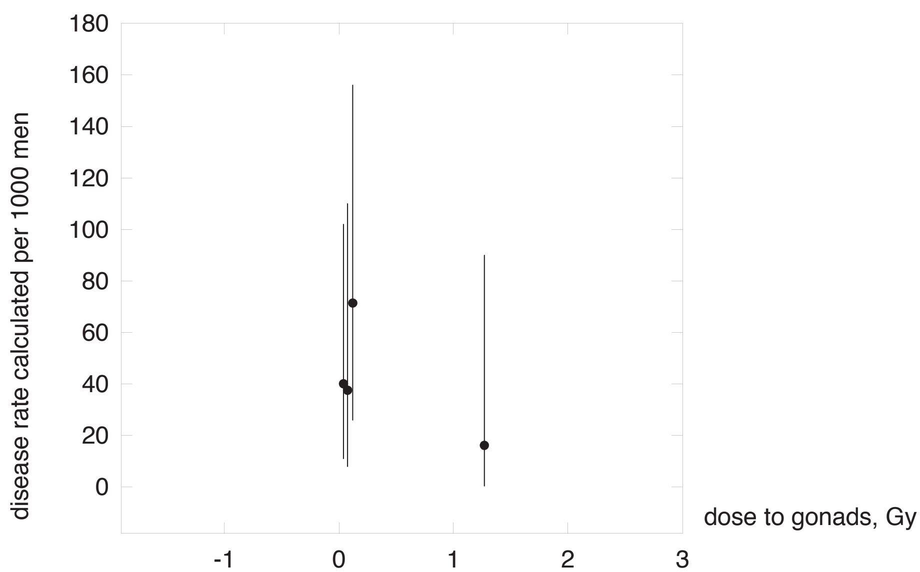


Figure 1. Dose dependence for orchitis and epidydymitis incidence in men with CRS diagnosis.

There were 187 cases of urinary system disorders and 824 cases of genital system disorders diagnosed in women with CRS. The rate of genital system diseases calculated per 1,000 was estimated to be 1342.0, which implies that, on the average, each woman diagnosed with CRS developed more than one disease (1.34, more precisely) of the genital organs over the 40-year period of follow-up. The most significant proportion of the total pathology of female sex organs consisted of inflammatory processes: colpitis, cervicitis, endometritis, salpingo-oophoritis. These processes could be initiated by different kinds of bacteria, Candida fungi, or trichomonads. Endometritis is most frequently associated with abortions or diagnostic curettage of the uterus [34]. Factors contributing to causation of inflammatory diseases of the genital organs in female residents of the Techa villages included inadequate living conditions, absence of sewerage, use of outdoor toilets in any weather (in winter time temperatures reached 20-30 degrees below zero), as well as numerous abortions.

Non-inflammatory processes are chiefly represented by erosion of the cervix uteri, i.e., desquamation of the stratified squamous epithelium of the vaginal part of the cervix uteri. An important role in the etiology of this process is played by inflammatory cervicitis and, possibly, by a disturbed steroid hormone balance. Dysplasia accompanying the erosion process is considered to be a precancerous condition.

Data characterizing the dose dependence of inflammatory (ICD Class 10, Rubrics 614-619) and non-inflammatory (ICD Class 10, Rubrics 620-625) processes going on in the genital organs of female patients with CRS are cited in Table 2.4 and Figure 2. No clear-cut dependence on gonadal dose has been established for this pathology.

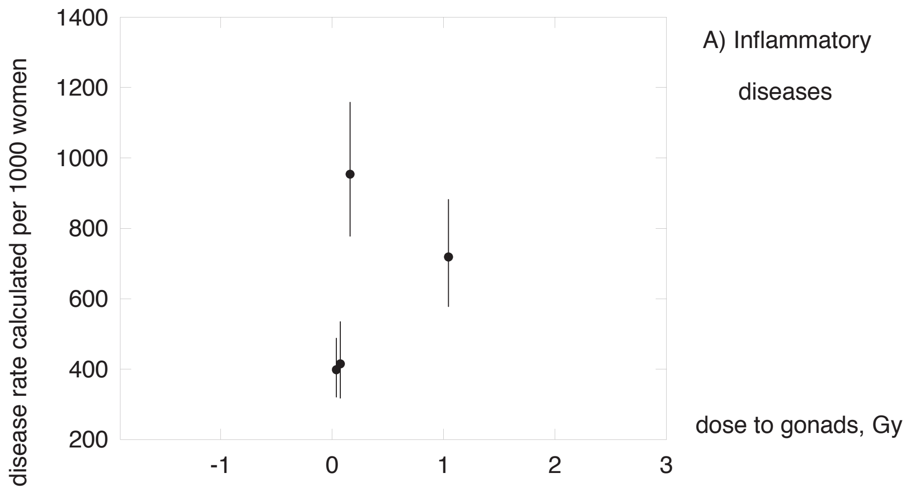
Table 2.4. Analysis of Dose Dependence for Inflammatory and Non-inflammatory Disorders of the Female Genital System in Patients with CRS.

Dose to Gonads, mSv	Inflammatory Disorders		Non-inflammatory Disorders	
	Cases	Coefficient x 10^{-3}	Cases	Coefficient x 10^{-3}
37	92	398 (321.0-488.3)	36	156 (109.1-215.6)
73	61	415 (317.5-534.9)	55	374 (281.7-487.1)
161	103	954 (778.2-157.8)	70	648 (504.9-818.5)
1,044	92	719 (578.6-881.8)	65	508 (392.0-649.9)

The diagnosis of infertility was made in 45 cases, which accounts for calculated rate value of 73.3 per 1,000 female patients with CRS. The question of whether these cases represent primary or secondary infertility will be addressed below in the sections discussing the data on infertile marriages and number of children born. According to the Russian statistics, infertility rate is a highly variable characteristic, liable to locality- and year-specific changes. It is indicated that the fraction of women with primary and secondary infertility is as high as 20%.

The data obtained by analyzing dose dependence for women with CRS are presented below (Figure 2). The infertility coefficient proved to be slightly higher for groups with medium gonadal doses 73 - 161 mSv. (Figure 3a).

Among the 205 cases of diseases associated with menstrual dysfunction diagnosed in women with CRS there were the following: dysfunctional uterine bleeding in women of reproductive age, pathological conditions in the premenstrual period, climacteric syndrome, etc. The menstrual syndrome will be discussed in detail in the next section. Figure 3b shows data on the incidence of menstrual disorders at different gonadal doses. This kind of pathology was found to be independent of dose in women with CRS.



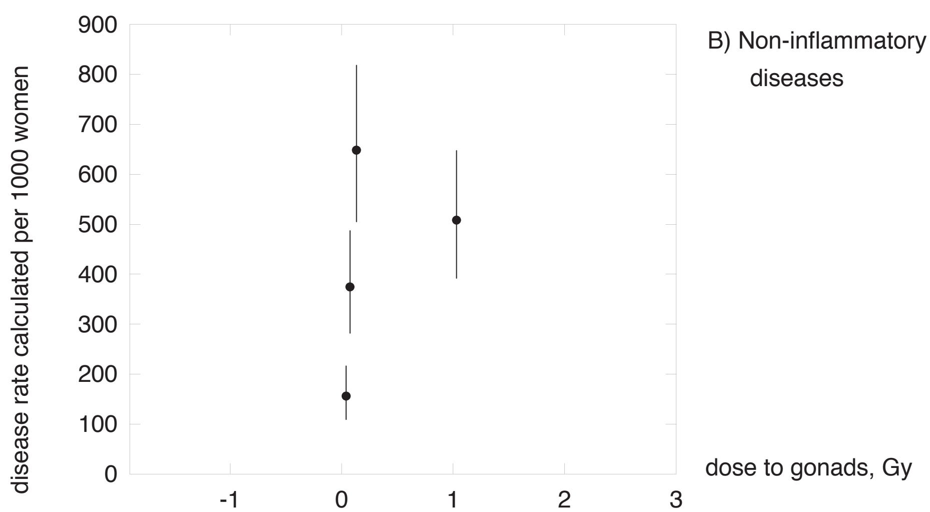
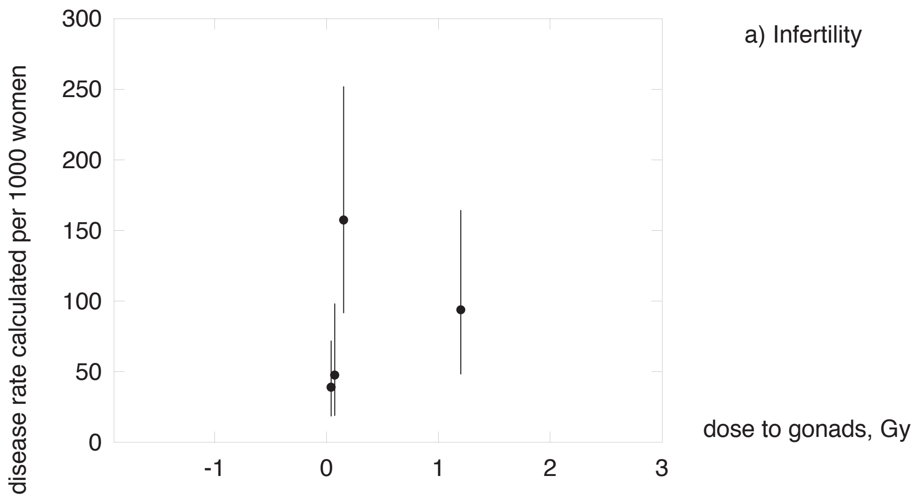


Figure 2. Dose dependence for female genital system morbidity among patients with CRS.



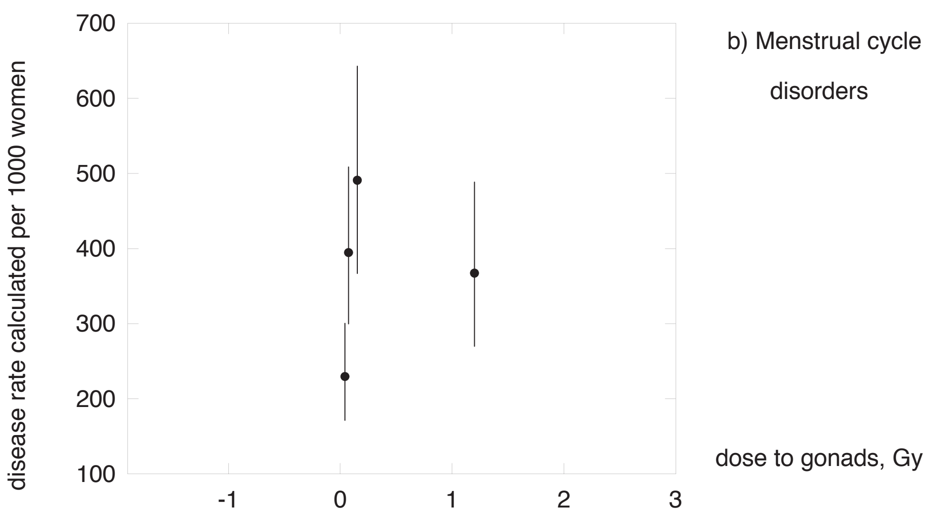


Figure 3. Dose dependence for incidence of genital organ disorders among women with CRS.

Section 3.0 Menstrual Function

Menstrual function was evaluated for 126 female patients with CRS. Of this number there were 42 patients whose age at the onset of exposure was 31 and older (13% of the total number of women the same age with CRS), 29 aged 30-21 (23.6%), 38 aged 20-11 (33.6%), and 17 whose age was 10 years and younger (27%). The results of the study were compared to the data on the menstrual function for 661 women who were exposed on the Techa but did not develop CRS. The second comparison group consisted of unexposed women residents of the same administrative districts as exposed women. The members of the latter control group were questioned and examined by the gynecologists N.K. Saushkina, N.S. Kolbina and L. Dmitrieva [35, 36]. The data on age at menarche and age at menopause, duration of menstrual cycle, menstrual pains and quantity of menstrual blood were recorded by the gynecologists on the basis of interviews and questionnaires.

Data on age at menarche for members of different age groups are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Age at Menarche and Incidence of Menstrual Function Disorders.

Groups Studied	Number of Persons Studied	Mean Age at Menarche	Incidence (%) of Delayed Menarche (17 yrs and More)	Incidence of Hypo-menorrhea (%)	Incidence of Hyper-menorrhea (%)
Women with CRS born 1919 and earlier	42	15.88	30.9	2.4	9.5
1920-1929	29	15.79	27.6	6.9	37.9
1930-1939	38	15.18	26.3	2.6	15.8
1940 and later	17	15.06	23.5	11.8	11.8
Exposed women without CRS born 1940 and later	233	14.25	6.0	2.02	19.4

It follows from the data cited in Table 3.1 that there is a clear-cut decrease in age at menarche depending on year of birth. Figure 4 shows it even more clearly. While the mean age at menarche for women born in 1919 and earlier, whose menarche started before the radiation exposure, was 15.9, the respective value for women born after 1919 was decreasing: 15.8, 15.2, 15.1. In our opinion, this dependence cannot be attributed to radiation exposure. Evidently, the factor of gradually improving life conditions in the post-war period along with growth acceleration processes became manifest in Russia after the 1960s. The same tendency is reflected in the incidence of cases with late age at menarche.

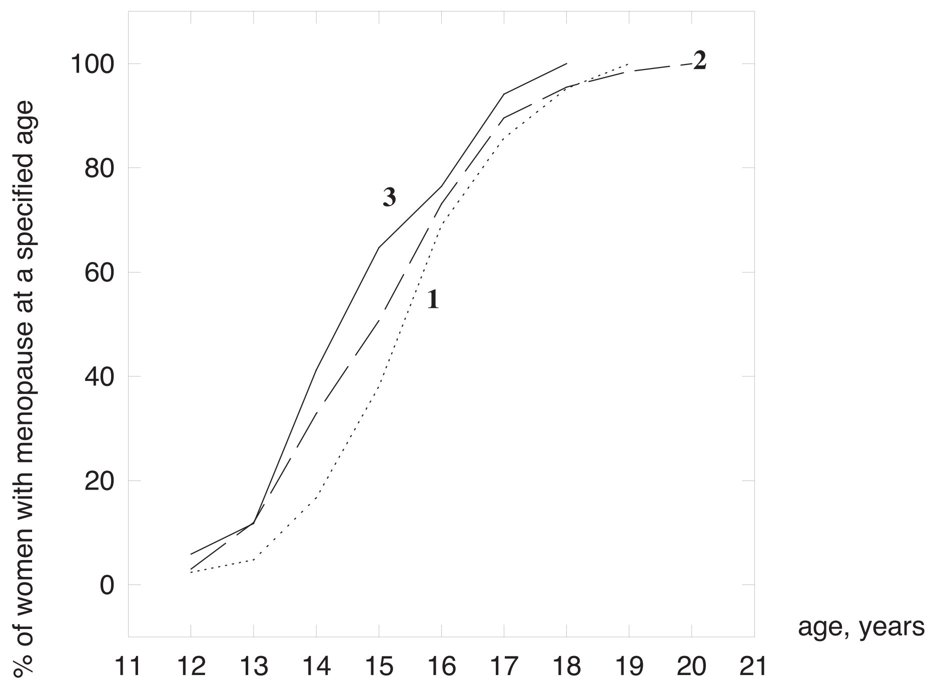


Figure 4. Distribution of women with CRS according to the age at menarche (accumulation curve).

1) years of birth: 1919 and earlier

2) years of birth: 1920-1929

3) years of birth: 1930-1939

Of special interest are the results obtained by examining a group of women who were under 11 years by the time exposure started. The members of this group, who were born in 1940 and later, were exposed to a number of unfavorable factors, including: 1) their childhood years coincided with World War II and the hardships of the early post-war period; 2) exposure to radiation and accumulation of the gonadal dose occurred during their childhood; and 3) they developed CRS. One of the signs which served as a basis for establishing the diagnosis of CRS in some of the patients was infantilism, i.e., retarded and insufficient sexual development. As is indicated in a previous publication [29], in 4 cases out of 940 the key reason for diagnosis of CRS was the presence of symptoms of endocrine disorders manifested most clearly at the pubertal age among patients exposed in childhood. The disorders were mainly defined as hypoplasia of the genital apparatus.

The mean age at menarche was 15.06 years for CRS patients born in 1940 and later. This value is characterized by a significant uncertainty because of a small number of observations, but this mean age at menarche is slightly higher than that (14.25 years) for women of matched ages who were exposed to radiation but did not develop CRS (Figure 5). The differences in age at menarche between the two groups compared are statistically insignificant because of the small number of CRS patients studied. Works published in the 1980s and 1990s specified the mean age of menarche as 13 years [34].

It should be kept in view when comparing the proportion of women with delayed menarche (17 and more years) that among 17 studied patients with CRS there were 4 such cases (23.5%), and only 6% of similar cases were identified among exposed women of the same age without CRS. According to the data of two reports prepared by the gynecologists [35, 36], who in addition to exposed women examined also unexposed control groups numbering 25 and 48 persons, delayed menarche was noted among unexposed women in 0% - 5.4% of cases.

Disturbance of the menstrual cycle represented by hypermenorrhea or oligodysmenorrhea was most frequently observed among CRS patients born in 1920-1929. Hypermenorrhea was registered with similar frequency among patients born in 1940 or later with and without CRS. As far as the incidence of oligodysmenorrhea is concerned, patients with CRS developed it in 11.8% of cases, whereas among the comparison group the condition was observed less frequently, in 2% of cases.

According to literature sources [34], the average age for menopause, the last menstruation, is 50.8 years. Table 3.2 presents data on mean menopausal age for CRS patients and for exposed women of the same age without CRS.

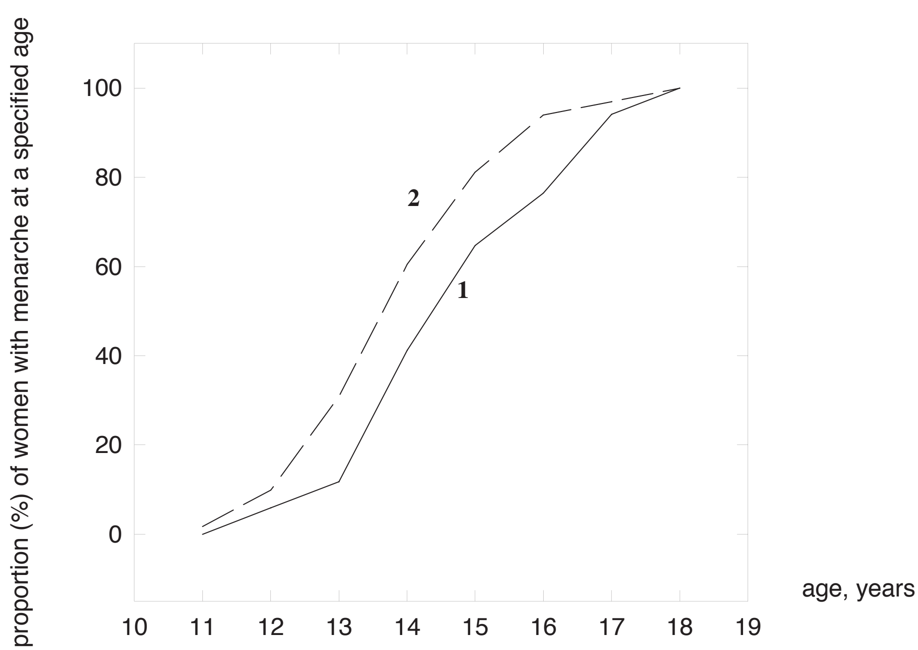


Figure 5. Comparison of menarche age of CRS and non-CRS women born in 1940-1950.

1) Women with CRS

2) non-CRS women

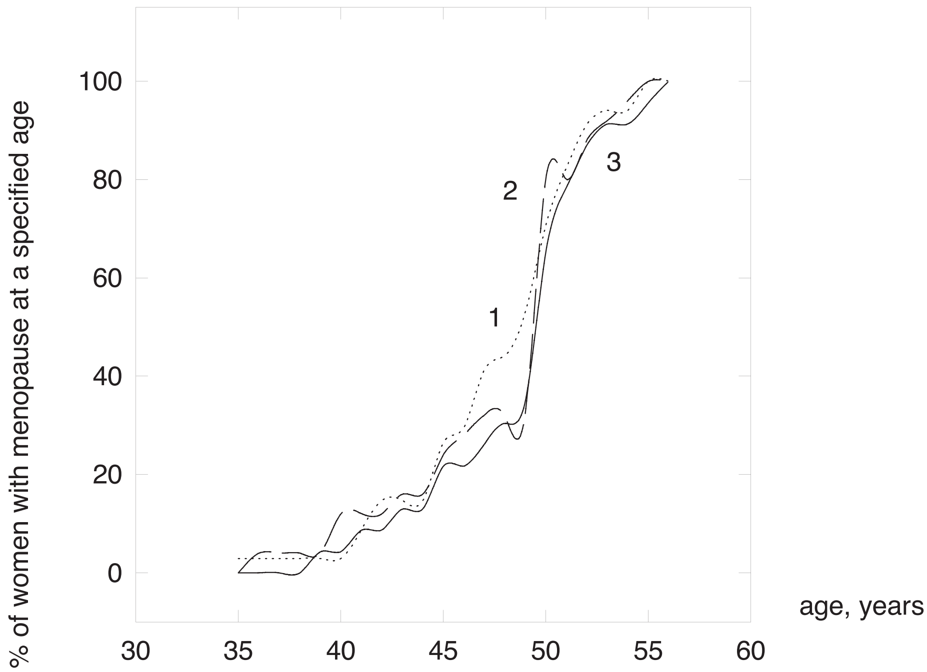


Figure 6. Distribution of women with CRS by age at menopause (cumulative curve).

1) years of birth: 1919 and earlier

2) years of birth: 1920-1929

3) years of birthh: 1930-1939

Table 3.2. Mean Age at Menopause.

Groups Studied	Number of Persons Examined	Mean Menopausal Age
Women with CRS born in 1919 and earlier	34	48.0
1920-1929	25	48.3
1930-1939	23	49.0
Exposed women without CRS born in: 1919 and earlier	66	48.4
1920-1929	164	48.0
1930-1939	198	47.7

For women included in our study the age at menopause proved to be lower than that cited in the publication under reference [34], namely, for different age groups from 49.0 to 47.7 years. It can be noted that in patients with CRS the menstrual cycle did not terminate earlier than in women of the same age cohort but without CRS. There is no clear-cut dependence between age at menopause and year of birth (Figure 6). It is in this feature that the difference between our results and the data on medical follow-up of female A-bomb survivors makes itself evident [14]. It has been shown by the Japanese researchers that the age at menopause increases for unexposed women born in 1935-1939 as compared to women born in 1915-1919. However, it is more important to note that in women exposed to acute radiation due to atomic bombardment the menopausal age decreased at an ovarian exposure dose in excess of 1.5-2.0 Gy.

The results of our attempt at analyzing the dependence of age at menopause on dose for women with CRS are presented in Figure 7.

Due to the small size of the sample there is a significant uncertainty inherent in age characteristics for all dose groups, which accounts for large values of confidence intervals. It should be noted that there is no evidence of dependence of menopausal age on dose accumulated in the ovaries.

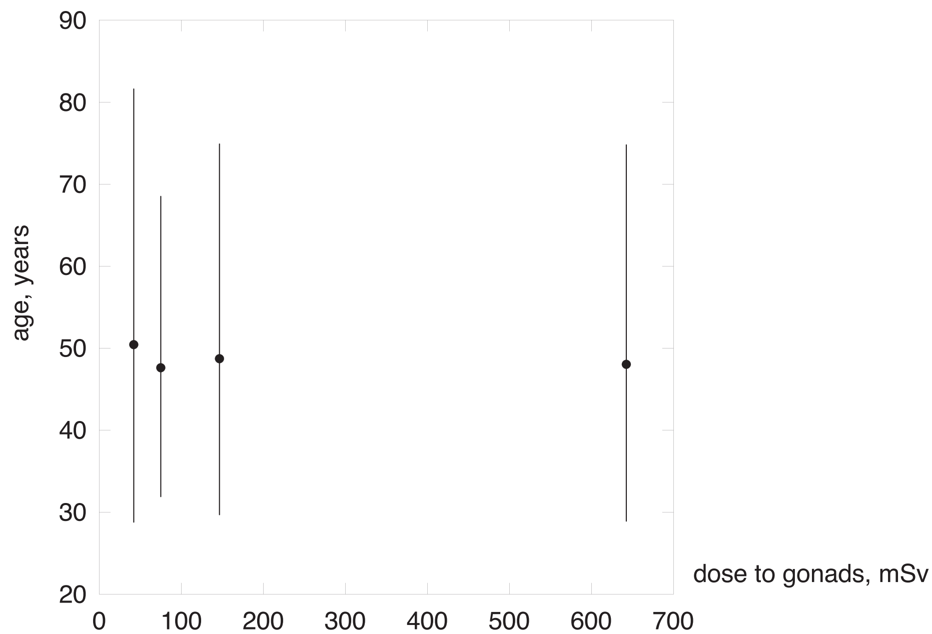


Figure 7. Age at menopause vs dose to ovaries.

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Section 4.0 Analysis of Marriage Coefficient

It was of interest to estimate the fraction of married patients with CRS since it allowed us to evaluate the reproductive function for exposed individuals, and provided an insight into the psychological problems faced by them. It was shown by a number of Japanese studies that a proportion of A-bomb survivors did not marry because they had developed an inferiority complex and a fear of giving birth to children with congenital deformities. In a number of cases in order to get married Japanese survivors had to conceal the fact of their having been present in Hiroshima or Nagasaki during the atomic blast.

The situation observed in the villages on the Techa was different. The radiation exposure was protracted, chronic, and the main point is that the information on radiation exposure was concealed from the population. It was not until 1989 with the advent of ¨glasnost¨ (openness) in the USSR, i.e., 40 years later, that the residents were actually told that they had been exposed to radiation. The population of several villages was evacuated from the Techa riverside area during the period 1953-1961. The reason for the evacuations was kept secret from the residents, and they were worried, as they were unable to perceive what was behind the secrecy.

The number of CRS patients who entered into marriage was estimated on the basis of data obtained by interviewing the members of the cohort. The results of the interviews were entered into a questionnaire referred to as "family history", which was designed for this specific aim. The questionnaire which contained questions on the patients' parents, siblings, spouses and children, including birth dates and residences for all of them, served as the basis for developing relevant computer files in the URCRM Database. Thus, our information on marriages was based on interviews; it was not derived from official documents certifying the fact of marriage. As a consequence, the marriage coefficients determined by the National Statistics may differ from those calculated in our study. The marriage coefficient determined by our studies should be higher since it reflects a "biological" rather than a legal phenomenon.

It should also be taken into consideration that about a quarter of the followed-up population was Tartars and Bashkirs by nationality and Muslim by religion. The Islamic creed permits polygamy which was prohibited by statutory law.

The data on family histories for residents of the Techa villages inside Chelyabinsk Region have been collected, and questionnaires have been filled out and made into computer files. This kind of work has not yet been completed for residents of the Techa riverside in Kurgan Region. Of the total of 940 CRS cases 787 occurred in the Chelyabinsk Region. It should be noted that we were only able to analyze 754 cases, since we failed to collect family history information on 33 persons who were lost to follow-up in the early period. The results of the study are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Marriage Coefficient for Patients with CRS.

Cohorts	Men	Women	Total
Persons diagnosed with CRS in Techa littoral villages within the Chelyabinsk Region	287	500	787
Family histories available	265	489	754
Married	262	482	744
Marriage coefficient (%)	98.9	98.6	98.7

Thus, it can be seen that three men and seven women did not enter into marriage after they attained the marital age. These cases were analyzed individually. Two of the men who were born in 1938 and 1946 and whose CRS was diagnosed in 1957 died at the age of 19 and 21. Those were cases of sudden death from an unidentified cause. The third man born in 1936 was diagnosed with CRS in 1953, and in 1966 he was noted to have recovered from his disease. Later on, he was followed up by the URCRM clinical staff until 1974, but he never gave any reasons for his being unmarried.

Of the seven unmarried women with CRS four died at ages from 19 to 27 from acute leukemia, cysticercosis of the brain, cerebrospinal sclerosis, and suicide. One woman born in 1932 has been an invalid since the age of 7 because of amputation of both legs and left forearm after a railway disaster. The two remaining women, twins born in 1944, were diagnosed with infantilism, which is evidently the cause of their being unmarried. The past history of these two women is presented in [29].

The marriage coefficient for patients with CRS is, on the whole, sufficiently high: 98.7%. It is quite compatible with the values cited for control in reference [37], namely, 96.5%. The USSR's national statistics for 1987 based on information on officially registered marriages shows lower marriage coefficients: 81.9%-82.6%.

Section 5.0 Birth of Children to Families of CRS Patients

The information on birth of children based on family history is available for 721 patients with CRS. As was indicated above, 744 members of the cohort married. However, 23 individuals left the locality (in the catchment area), and no information on the birth of children in their families is available.

The age composition of the study group is given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Age at Start of Exposure for the CRS Cohort.

Age at Start of Exposure	Men	Women	Total
≤ 20 years, born in 1930 and later	121	133	254
21-44 years, born in 1931-1906	101	249	350
≥ 45 years, born in 1905 and earlier	32	85	117

It can be seen that among patients with CRS 117 individuals were aged 45 and older by the time the exposure started. At this age the function of the reproductive system ceases. Of great significance for birth rate analysis were the remaining two age groups numbering 604 subjects who were under 45 by 1950. Their childbirth age coincided with the period of exposure to external radiation and incorporated radionuclides. The rate of childless marriages among the three age groups defined above is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Rate of Childless Marriages.

Age at Start of Exposure	Men		Women		Total	
	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%
≤ 20 years, born in 1930 and later	2	1.65	8	6.01	10	3.94
21-44 years, born in 1931-1906	6	5.94	6	2.41	12	3.43
≥ 45 years, born in 1905 and earlier	0	0	4	4.71	4	3.42

In all, 26 childless marriages were identified among 721 individuals studied. The proportion of childless families among married men and women diagnosed with CRS is about the same: 3.15% for men and 3.85% for women. A comparison of the percentage of childless families prior to exposure (3.64%) with that observed after beginning of exposure (3.42) demonstrated that there had been no increase in the rate of childless marriages after 1950.

The causes why a number of marriages were childless remain unclear. The results of reproductive function evaluation and birth coefficient estimation, as well as the influence exerted on them by anthropogenic factors, are difficult to obtain due to the practice of family planning established during the recent decade. In the 1940s and 1950s contraceptives were used less frequently, and abortions were banned. However, the likelihood that some families preferred not to have children cannot be ruled out.

There were no children in the families of eight married men with CRS. Two of them married twice, and one married three times, but all of his marriages proved childless. Another man was evidently exposed to occupational radiation, in addition to environmental radiation on the Techa, because he had worked as an X-ray technician since 1953. As was indicated above data on sperm studies for these individuals are unavailable.

Fourteen of the women with CRS were without children. One of them, a young woman, died soon after she was married. The cause of death was active rheumatic process, combined with mitral valve defect and circulatory insufficiency. Another childless woman born in 1905 suffered from a severe general somatic disease - chronic hepatitis associated with alcoholism. Primary infertility was diagnosed by the gynecologists in three patients with CRS on the basis of diencephalic diseases, infantile uterus, and late menarche. Two other patients were operated on for polycystosis of the ovaries. Chronic inflammatory processes of the genital organs (adnexitis, perimetritis, etc.) resulting from aborted first pregnancies were a likely cause of infertility in four other women. One woman was operated on for ectopic pregnancy following which no pregnancy occurred. No information is available on the causes of childless status for the remaining two CRS patients. Thus, the hypothesized causes of childless marriages among patients with CRS are as follows (Table 5.3):

Table 5.3. Probable Causes of Childless Families Among Women with CRS.

Diseases	Number of Cases	% of Childless Marriages
Hormonal disorders	5	27.8
Chronic inflammatory processes of genital organs	5	27.8
Severe extragenital processes	2	11.1

Of considerable interest would be to analyze the rate of childless marriages versus dose to the gonads. This kind of analysis was conducted for patients who were under 45 years (604 individuals) at the time exposure started (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Rate of Childless Families by Gonadal Doses.

Dose to Gonads, mSv	Childless Families	Families with Children	% of Childless Marriages
< 50	3	123	2.38
50 - 99	4	170	2.30
100 - 399	8	160	4.76
≥ 400	7	129	5.15

It can be noted that the percentage of childless marriages increases with gonadal dose.

Table 5.4 takes into account the gonadal dose of only one of the spouses. However, both spouses were exposed in two-thirds of the marriages, and in one-third of the cases only the husband or wife was exposed. There are five cases for which information on whether or not the spouse of the CRS patient was exposed is missing. Table 5.5 lists data on families with and without children for 577 patients with CRS as a function of exposure of one or both spouses.

Table 5.5. Families with and without Children vs. Exposure of One or Both Spouses.

Group	Families with Children	Families without Children
Both spouses exposed	404	18 (4.26%)
Only CRS patient exposed, his/her spouse unexposed	173	4 (2.26%)

In instances where both spouses are exposed, the rate of childless marriages increases about twofold; the difference, however, is not statistically significant. It should be noted that among the 79 families with both spouses diagnosed with CRS there were two childless families (2.53%).

A more correct approach to dose dependence analysis for childless marriages would be to estimate gonadal doses by adding together doses received by both parents (Table 5.6).

There was a slight increase in the rate of childless marriages with increasing dose to the gonads: from 2.9% at doses below 100 mSv to 7.6% for the group with an average dose of 2133 mSv. Dose dependence is presented in Figure 8.

By approximating the dose dependence for childless marriages using linear regression, the proportion of childless marriages with zero exposure dose constitutes 3.46%, and the dose coefficient per Sievert is equal to 2.3.

Table 5.6. The Rate of Childless Marriages at Different Aggregate Doses Received by Both Spouses.

Dose Ranges for Groups, mSv	Families with Children	Families without Children	Rate of Childless Marriages, (%)
< 100	100	3	2.91
100 - 199	107	3	2.73
200 - 399	101	4	3.81
400 - 999	35	3	7.89
≥ 1000	61	5	7.57

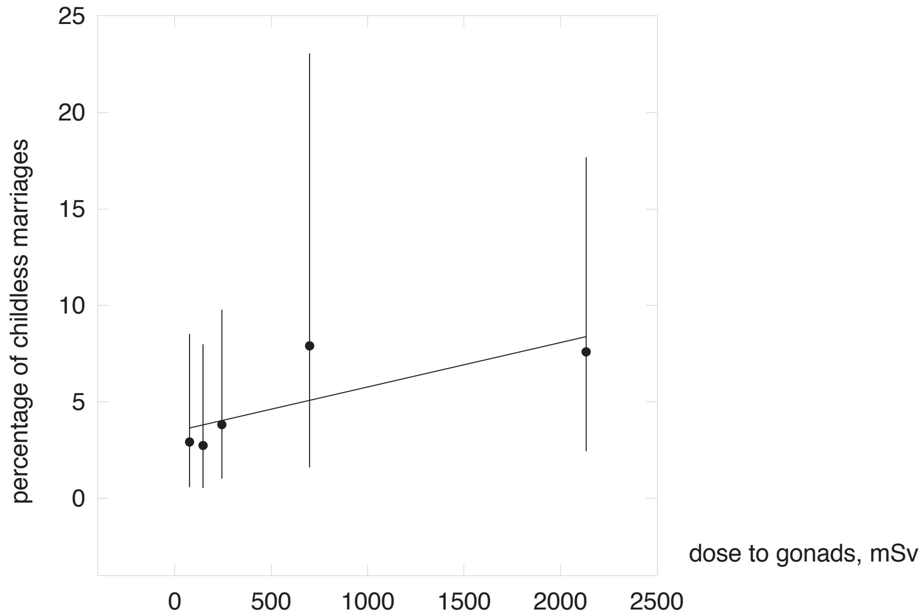

Figure 8. Rate (%) of childless marriages at different aggregate doses to the gonads of both spouses.

Section 6.0 Course and Outcomes of Pregnancy

It is known that acceleration of mutational processes is one of the key effects of ionizing radiation. However, genetic monitoring of human populations for effects of environmental pollution in general, and radiation contamination in particular, is an extremely complicated task. No data on rates of spontaneous mutational processes are available. No adequately developed methodology for assessment of gene mutations existed in Russia. For this reason we had to apply the phenotypical approach to the assessment of the mutagenic effect of radiation, based on analysis of antenatal fetus loss and congenital developmental defects. This chapter will present the analysis of spontaneous abortions and labor complications which may have been induced by chronic radiation exposure in the Techa riverside villages.

6.1 Medical and Criminal Abortions

Pregnancies which resulted in medical or criminal abortions were analyzed on the basis of both labor histories and interviewing the women. Table 6.1 below shows only the pregnancies that occurred after the onset of radiation exposure, i.e., after 1949. Labor histories contain 3,772 entries on such pregnancies.

Table 6.1. Data on Pregnancies and Abortions Based on Labor Histories.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Spouses Exposed	Both Spouses Unexposed (control)
Total women followed up	39	90	533	557
Total pregnancies	154	201	1,894	1,523
Medical abortions	8	13	170	92
Criminal abortions	6	1	3	1
Spontaneous abortions	12	12	56	35
Ectopic pregnancies	0	1	2	1

Information on abortions and the outcomes of pregnancies prior to the abortion was based on labor histories taken by questioning women on their gynecologic and obstetric anamnesis. According to the information based on labor history only a small number of pregnancies ended in medical or criminal abortion, namely, 294, or 7.8%. Information obtained by interviewing women on the incidence of abortions is listed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2. Pregnancies and Abortions Based on Interviews.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Exposed Women	Both Parents Exposed
Total women followed up	129	286	457
Total pregnancies	1,173	2,036	3,787
Number of pregnancies per woman	9.1	7.1	8.3
Medical abortions	400	1,195	2,025
Criminal abortions	19	25	84
Spontaneous abortions	27	84	97
Ectopic pregnancies	5	16	23
Number of abortions per 100 births	61.8	82.1	141.6
Reasons for abortions:			
-unwillingness to have children	419	1218	2090
-medical indications	0	2	19

The analysis of interviews conducted by gynecologists in 1985-1989 showed that abortions made up a much larger proportion of all pregnancies. Only a small percentage of abortions, 0.9% for the unexposed cohort, were performed on the basis of therapeutic indications. The rest of the abortions (medical or criminal) were performed according to the wishes of the women themselves.

The unified information on the incidence of abortions (according to two sources: labor histories and interviews) is presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3. Summarized Information on Pregnancies and Abortions Based on Labor Histories and Interviews.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Exposed Women	Both Spouses Exposed	Both Spouses Unexposed (control)
Total women followed up	168	376	990	557
Total pregnancies	1,327	2,237	5,681	1,523
Medical abortions	408	1,208	2,195	92
Criminal abortions	25	26	87	1
Spontaneous abortions	39	96	153	35

The data presented here allowed us to study the outcomes of pregnancies. There was an average of 6.8 pregnancies in the exposed women, and an average of 2.7 pregnancies registered in the unexposed women (control). It can be seen that those of the followed up women who did not want to have children hardly used any contraceptives, and the fraction of abortions was very high in relation to the total pregnancies. The number of therapeutic and criminal abortions per 100 labors was 70-136 for exposed persons, and 51 for women with CRS. These differences can be explained by different mean ages of the women interviewed. The mean age of CRS patients was significantly older, and their reproductive function activity occurred mainly during the period when abortions were prohibited. This accounts for a higher incidence (about 60%) of criminal abortions among patients with CRS. In view of the high significance of these data on the incidence of spontaneous abortions for analysis of a potential mutagenic effect of radiation, this issue is discussed in a separate section of the report.

6.2 Spontaneous Abortions

The rate of intrauterine fetal loss is an important issue of radiation genetics. One of the components of fetal loss is spontaneous abortions. From the point of view of a number of researchers it is expedient to analyze the incidence of spontaneous abortions which allows one to register the intensity of the mutational process, since it is assumed by them that about 50% of spontaneous abortions are caused by genetic factors [5]. At the same time, it should be noted that the incidence of spontaneous abortions, according to published data, is highly variable, ranging from 4-5 to 50-60 per 100 pregnant women [32]. According to medical records containing entries on spontaneous abortions, which commonly occur late in the gestation period, their rate accounts for 3-6% of total pregnancies [5], which is evidently lower than the actual rate of spontaneous abortions. Abortions developing at an early stage of pregnancy, when the woman is still unaware of the pregnancy, are regarded by her as irregularity of menses and are not registered at medical institutions [32].

According to the data derived from labor histories (Table 6.1), the incidence of spontaneous abortions among exposed women is, on the whole, somewhat higher (3.56%) than among controls (2.30%); however, these differences are not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). No increase in the incidence of spontaneous abortions was noted for cases with both parents exposed, compared to cases with only the mother exposed. The proportion of spontaneous abortions is the highest for women with CRS, but the statistical sample is small.

According to data obtained from interviews (Table 6.2), the incidence of spontaneous abortions was 2.30% among women with CRS, 4.13% among exposed women, and 2.56% among families with both parents exposed. On the whole, the incidence of spontaneous abortions among total exposed women was 3.0% (95% CI: 2.60; 3.43), according to the interview data; thus, it was not statistically different from that based on labor histories. The number of spontaneous abortions calculated per 100 pregnancies is shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4. Incidence of Spontaneous Abortions.

Parameter	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Parents Exposed	Both Parents Unexposed (control)
Total women followed up	168	376	990	557
Total pregnancies	1,327	2,237	5,681	1,523
Spontaneous abortions	39	96	153	35
Number of spontaneous abortions per 100 pregnancies	2.94	4.29	2.69	2.30

The findings determined as a result of analysis of merged data (labor histories and interviews) remain valid when information sources are studied separately, viz., the incidence of spontaneous abortions is somewhat higher for exposed subjects - 3.11% (95% CI: 2.76; 3.81), than for controls – 2.30% (95% CI: 1.60; 3.19), however, no statistically significant differences (defined as $p<0.05$) can be noted. The incidence of spontaneous abortions among women with CRS accounted for 2.94%, which was not higher than that estimated for exposed women without CRS.

Linear approximation of dose dependence allowed us to estimate the spontaneous rate as 3.07%, and the estimated coefficient of dose dependence turned out to be positive, though its value (0.08 per 1 Sv) was low.

6.3 Course of Pregnancy

The results of analysis of data on the course of pregnancies are in Table 6.5.

Other pregnancy complications include threat of pregnancy interruptions, hemorrhage, situs inversus, and hydramnion. The most common pregnancy complication was toxicosis, occurring in the early or late stages, or both. It was indicated in earlier studies [36] that the incidence of pathologic pregnancy was higher among exposed women compared to controls. The present study allowed us to identify substantially more frequently pregnancy complications among women with CRS, viz., 18.75% (95% CI: 12.02; 29.9) compared to the group of unexposed couples – 8.25% (95% CI: 6.8; 9.9).

Table 6.5. Course of Pregnancy Based on Labor History Data.

Parameters	Women with CRS		Exposed Women		Both Spouses Exposed		Both Spouses Unexposed (control)	
	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%
Number of pregnancies without abortions	128	100	174	100	1,663	100	1,394	100
Number of pregnancies without complications	104	81.3	152	87.3	1,457	87.6	1,279	91.8
Toxicosis	7	5.5	9	5.2	82	4.9	34	2.4
Other complications	17	13.3	13	7.5	124	7.5	81	5.8

6.4 Outcomes of Pregnancy

Information on outcomes of pregnancy based on labor history is indicated in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6. Outcomes of Pregnancy Based on Labor History Data.

Parameters	Women with CRS		Exposed Women		Both Spouses Exposed		Both Spouses Unexposed (control)	
	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%	Cases	%
Number of pregnancies without abortions	128	100	175	100	1,665	100	1,395	100
Ectopic pregnancies	0	0	1	0.6	2	0.1	1	0.1
Labor at term	122	95.3	166	94.8	1,546	92.8	1,319	94.6
Premature labor	1	0.8	7	4.0	82	4.9	49	3.5
Delayed labor	5	3.9	1	0.6	35	2.1	26	1.9

The comparative analysis of outcomes of 128 pregnancies registered among CRS patients, 1,840 pregnancies among exposed women and 1,395 pregnancies among control subjects, did not reveal differences in the incidences of ectopic pregnancies, prolonged pregnancies, or premature labors.

6.5 Course of Labor

The information on the course of labor could only be derived from labor histories. Besides, only a portion of medical records contained information sufficient to analyze the nature of labor activity and clear-cut pathology. The information obtained by interviewing women provided no objective basis for estimating the incidence of pathological course of labor activity. Data on the course of labor based on labor history are listed below (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7. Course of Labor Based on Labor History Data.

Parameters	**Women with CRS**		**Exposed Women**		**Both Spouses Exposed**		**Both Spouses Unexposed (control)**	
	Cases	**%**	**Cases**	**%**	**Cases**	**%**	**Cases**	**%**
Number of labors studied	128	100	174	100	1,663	100	1,394	100
Total labor pathology, including:	31	24.2	26	14.9	225	13.5	177	12.7
Placental pathology	1	0.8	0	0	12	0.7	19	1.4
Umbilical pathology	16	12.5	14	8.0	122	7.3	104	7.5
Other complications, including hemorrhage at labor	14	10.9	9	5.2	87	5.2	44	3.1
Surgical interventions	0	0	3	1.7	4	0.2	10	0.7
Normal labor	97	75.8	148	85.1	1,438	86.5	1,217	87.3

Pathological labor was registered twice as frequently among women with CRS - 24.2% (95% CI: 16.5; 34.3), compared to controls – 12.7% (95% CI: 10.9; 14.7). The differences are statistically significant ($p<0.01$). Labor pathology is commonly manifested by lengthening of the umbilical cord or its entwining about the infant's neck, and by frequent hemorrhages.

Section 7.0 Assessment of Health Status of Neonates

The health status of neonates was assessed on the basis of records made in the neonatal development history. As is indicated above, it became possible to analyze all pregnancy outcomes on the basis of labor histories and neonatal development histories, but only a portion (1,989 records on newborns out of 2,996 labors reported by interviewed women) were included in the analysis. The respective data are shown in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

Table 7.1. Health Status Assessment of Neonates Based on Data from Neonatal Development Histories.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Exposed Women	Both Spouses Exposed	Both Spouses Unexposed (control)
Number of women	39	90	533	557
Number of labors	128	174	1,663	1,394
Number of live births	128	173	1,672	1,387
Multiple labors	4 (3.13%)	3 (1.72%)	35 (2.10%)	11 (0.79%)
Number of stillborns	4 (3.03%)	4 (2.26%)	26 (1.53%)	18 (1.28%)
Deaths within first 7 postpartum days	1 (0.78%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.12%)	1 (0.07%)
Newborns with congenital developmental defects	0 of 57 (0%)	0 of 102 (0%)	7 of 830 (0.84%)	4 of 605 (0.66%)

Table 7.2. Health Status Assessment of Neonates Based on Data from Interviews.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Parents Exposed
Number of women	129	286	457
Number of labors	284	519	1,183
Number of live births	283	519	1,180
Multiple labors	3 (1.06%)	5 (0.96%)	6 (0.51%)
Number of stillborns	4 (1.39%)	5 (0.95%)	9 (0.76%)
Deaths within first 7 postpartum days	2 (0.71%)	1 (0.19%)	6 (0.51%)

7.1 Birth of Twins (Multiple Pregnancy)

According to literature data the rate of twin birth ranges from 0.4% to 1.6% [6]. Based on interview and labor history data we were able to analyze 5,327 labors for which reliable information on birth of one or two children was available. The relevant data are shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3. Multiple Pregnancy.

Parameter	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Parents Exposed	Both Parents Unexposed (control)
Number of labors	412	693	2,846	1,394
Multiple labors	7	8	41	11
Rate of multiple labors, %	1.70	1.15	1.44	0.79

It can be seen that the rate of multiple labor in all groups was found to be within the range of values cited in the literature as normal. However, the rate of birth of twins was 1.70% (95% CI: 0.68, 3.50) for women with CRS and 1.42% (95% CI: 1.07; 1.85) for women exposed to radiation; these values were roughly twice as high than for unexposed controls, which was 0.79% (95% CI: 0.39; 1.41). At the same time, the differences observed are not statistically significant. Using the linear approximation equation $y = a + bD$, where D = dose, the zero exposure rate of multiple labor was estimated to be $a = 1.28\%$, and the coefficient of dose dependence $b = 0.31$ per Sv.

7.2 Perinatal Mortality

Stillborns

The criteria of stillbirth include absence of independent extrauterine breathing at birth and failure to resuscitate the infant using methods of artificial breathing. In accordance to the regulations in force in Russia a stillborn is defined as a fetus born after 28 weeks of gestation with body weight of over 1,000 g and body length no less than 35 cm which failed to make a single independent inspiration at birth [6]. Congenital developmental abnormalities of the fetus account for 7.5% of the total structure of causes of stillbirth. Other causes include asphyxia, abnormalities of the placenta and umbilicus, etc. [6].

The coefficient of stillbirth is estimated according to the following formula: ratio of stillborns to the sum of live births plus stillborns, multiplied by 100 [38]. However, the values of stillbirth coefficients cited in statistical reviews are calculated per 1,000 live births plus stillborns [39, 40]. In 1980 the stillbirth coefficient for the USSR was estimated as 9.11 per 1,000, and for the USSR Republics it ranged from 5.15 to 13.81 [39]. For rural localities in 1980-1992 in Russia the rate of stillbirth was 6.5-7.5 per 1,000 live births [41].

The data cited in Table 7.1 above indicate that stillbirth coefficients registered for the maternity homes in Muslyumovo and Kunashak in the period 1956-1973 was essentially higher than that for the USSR in 1980, viz., it accounted for 1.52% (95% CI: 1.13; 1.98) or 15.24 per 1,000. As assessed on the basis of the results of the interviews (Table 7.2) the incidence of stillborns was somewhat lower: 18 cases per 2,000 neonates, or 0.90% (95% CI: 0.53; 1.42). No increase in the incidence of stillbirth resulted from exposure of both parents as compared to exposure of only the mother. A slightly higher percentage of stillbirths was noted for cases of exposed mothers with CRS as compared to the controls; the differences, however, are insignificant.

One more source of information on stillbirth was analyzed, the so-called “birth certificate”. Birth certificates stored at the Chelyabinsk Regional ZAGS archives have been abstracted by the URCRM staff. In all, 4,504 birth certificates pertaining to birth of children to exposed parents in 1950-1958 were reviewed. Twenty-seven birth certificates contained entries on stillbirth. Based on this source the stillbirth rate was 0.6%. It can be assumed that the information on stillbirths contained in labor histories and neonatal development histories is more complete compared to that derived from birth certificates. According to legislation in force a stillborn should be registered by the parents at the Regional Registrar’s Office (ZAGS). However, since the procedure was psychologically painful to the parents of the stillborn infant, they refrained from performing those formalities, hence, the lack of birth certificates for a portion of stillborns.

7.3 Early Neonatal Death

Early neonatal death can be defined as death of a neonate during the first week of life. The coefficient of early neonatal mortality is calculated as the ratio of the number of children who died during the first week of life to the number of live births, multiplied by 1,000. Congenital developmental abnormalities constitute 14% in the structure of early neonatal death. As a rule, the proportion of neonates who died during the first week of life is 1.5 times lower than the proportion of stillborns [6].

According to official statistics the rate of early neonatal death for 1980 was estimated to be 6.8 for the USSR as a whole, and 3.4 per 1,000 for rural localities [41]. However, it is stated in the same publication that in the USSR the open official statistics underestimated, for political reasons, the rate of infant mortality in general, and above all, the rate of early neonatal death. Highlighting a decrease in child mortality in the USSR the governmental bodies urged the staff of maternity homes to underreport cases of early neonatal death. In order to form an idea of true rates of neonatal death in the Soviet period it was suggested to apply adjustment coefficients which allow us to estimate the rate value. The calculations are based on a regression model of dependence of neonatal death rate on the rate of postnatal death [41].

As can be seen from Table 7.1 only 4 death cases out of 3,360 live births were registered at the maternity home: 1 control case, 1 case in a patient with CRS, and 2 cases in families with both parents exposed. This yields a rate of 1.19

(95% CI: 0.32; 3.05) per 1,000 live births. The coefficients of early neonatal death estimated per 1,000 live births were 7.81 for women with CRS, 1.20 for families of exposed parents, and 0.72 for controls. Thus, according to information provided by maternity homes which analyzed labor histories and neonatal development histories, the rate of stillbirth turned out to be higher, and that of early neonatal death lower than values listed in official sources [39]. It may be due to the fact that obstetricians, afraid of responsibility for cases of early neonatal death, did not register such cases. In addition, the criteria according to which a death case should be assigned to antenatal vs. postnatal death were not always observed.

According to interview information (Table 7.2) early neonatal death is higher for the total of radiation exposed subjects: 9 cases per 1,982 live births or 4.54 (95% CI: 2.08; 8.64) per 1,000 live births.

7.4 Developmental Defects Diagnosed at Birth

Some authors are of the opinion that the rate of birth of children with developmental defects provides a basis for the assessment of intensity of mutational processes [5, 7]. The diseases, combined in a common group of developmental defects or congenital anomalies, represent a group of multi-factor illnesses.

At a maternity home it is impossible to diagnose all developmental defects when a child is born. It is assumed that there are about 10 gross developmental defects which can be easily diagnosed at birth, the so called "sentinel" phenotypes [42]: anencephaly, hydrocephaly, microcephaly, spinal hernia, congenital aplasia of the extremities, polydactyly, cleft lip and palate, spina bifida, anal atresia, and multiple developmental defects. The rate of the above indicated developmental defects may be estimated as 5 cases per 1,000 live births [5].

According to the information accessible to us the presence or absence of a developmental defect was registered only in the development histories of 1,594 neonates, among whom 11 congenital defects were observed. The rate of congenital anomalies calculated per 1,000 newborns was 6.90; for the exposed it was 7.08 and for controls - 6.61.

The interview method proved ineffective for analyzing developmental defects diagnosed at birth because the interviewed women tended to list developmental defects that were diagnosed in their children at later ages.

7.5 Unfavorable Outcomes of Pregnancy

Unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy, including spontaneous abortions, perinatal death and congenital developmental defects based on information from labor histories and neonatal development histories, are presented in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4. Unfavorable Outcomes of Pregnancies (%) Based on Labor Histories and Neonatal Development Histories.

Parameter	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Parents Exposed	Both Parents Unexposed (control)
Spontaneous abortions	7.79	5.97	2.96	2.30
Stillborns	3.03	2.26	1.53	1.28
Early neonatal death rate	0.78	0	0.12	0.07
Congenital developmental defects	0	0	0.84	0.66
Total unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies	11.60	8.23	5.45	4.31

The rate of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies assessed for exposed persons diagnosed with CRS was higher than for controls, the difference being statistically significant: 11.6% (95% CI: 6.79; 18.58) and 4.31% (95% CI: 3.02; 5.96), respectively.

Unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies including spontaneous abortions and perinatal death based on interviews are presented in Table 7.5.

According to interview data the rate of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes constituted 3.83%-5.26%. Based on both information sources the rate of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy ranged from 4.31% to 5.71%, which is close to the respective values yielded for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki populations: 4.80% for the offspring of A-bomb survivors, and 4.64% for controls [7]. It should be noted that according to all information unfavorable pregnancy outcomes are observed with somewhat higher frequency (however, statistically insignificant) than for groups with both parents exposed, which actually resulted in a doubled dose. This may be regarded as indirect evidence of radiation exposure being not the only and, possibly, not the predominant factor governing the rate of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes.

Table 7.5. Unfavorable Pregnancy Outcomes Based on Interviews.

Parameters	Women with CRS	Women Exposed	Both Spouses Exposed
Spontaneous abortions	2.30	4.12	2.56
Stillborns	1.39	0.95	0.76
Early neonatal death rate	0.71	0.19	0.51
Unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy (total)	4.40	5.26	3.83

As was indicated above, the data contained in labor histories and neonatal development histories date from the time close to the onset of radiation exposure. They are confirmed by documentation, which makes them more reliable and applicable to the analysis of the course of pregnancy and labor, as well as to the identification of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy. At the same time, all data contained in the labor histories relate to women exposed in the villages of Muslyumovo and Kurmanovo who had comparable gonadal doses, which precluded us from sampling several dose groups for analysis.

No differences in the rate of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes were noted within the dose range from 50 to 400 mSv. At the same time, loss of fetus or child was registered less frequently among controls, and significantly more frequently among CRS patients (than among controls). Dose dependence approximation (based on four values of gonadal doses) showed a positive, though a very small, slope of the approximating curve over the x-axis. At x equal to 0 the rate of unfavorable pregnancy outcomes was 4.58%. The estimated value of the dose coefficient was equal to 0.003 per mSv.

Section 8.0 Anthropometric Characteristics of Newborns

The interest in anthropometric characteristics of children born to exposed parents is mostly motivated by the fact that the incidence of small head size among neonates born to women who were at 10-18 weeks of gestation at the time of acute radiation exposure in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was noted to be increased [19, 20].

The information we have at our disposal includes body weight for 1,565 neonates, and body length at birth for 892 neonates. Head circumference was measured with much lesser frequency during the time for which labor documentation and neonatal development histories are available to us. There were in all 510 entries on head circumference measurement. The distribution of newborns by body weight and length was analyzed for three groups:

- children born to parents with CRS;
- children born to exposed parents without CRS;
- children born to unexposed parents.

The focus of the analysis was on infants born at term (gestational age: 38-42 weeks); twins were excluded from the analysis.

Anthropometric parameters of the newborns are presented in Table 8.1.

Neonates born to CRS patients did not differ in terms of average head circumference, body weight, or body length from those born to exposed people without CRS or controls.

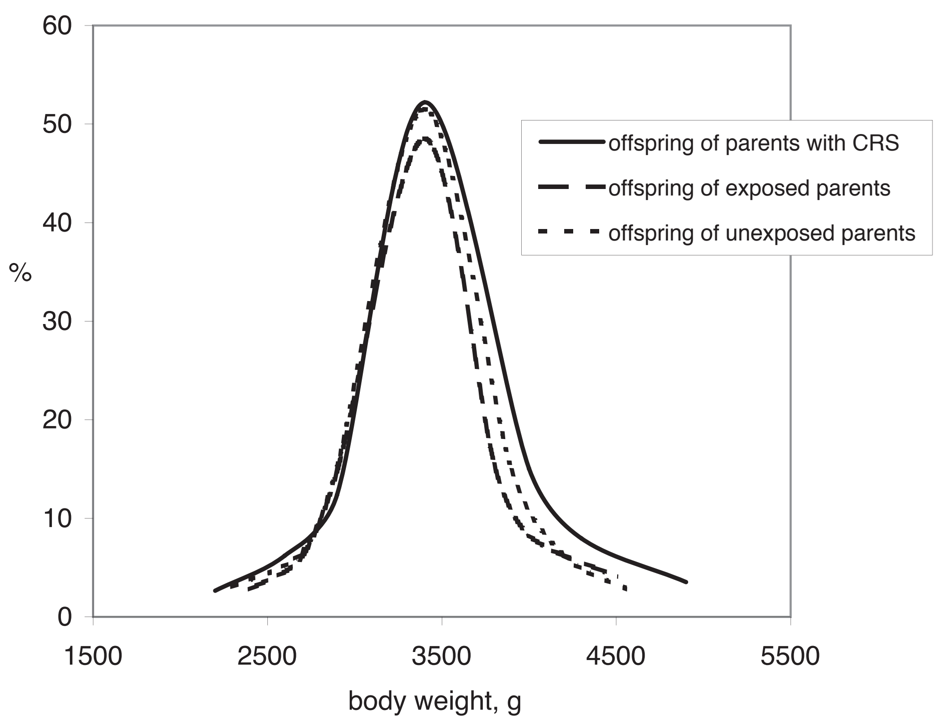

Figure 9. Distribution of neonates by body weight

Body weight distribution for the above-indicated groups is shown in Figure 9. The tables to be used for constructing graphs were based on percentiles. It can be observed that in spite of comparable average values, children born to persons with CRS are characterized by a wider scattering, i.e., there is an increased proportion of both children with larger body weights and those with smaller body weights.

Body length and head circumference distributions for neonates born to exposed and control parents are presented in Figures 10 and 11. It was impossible to construct a graph describing the distribution of anthropometric parameters for infants born to patients with CRS because of insufficient data. A slight increase was noted in the borderline values of anthropometric parameters for children born to exposed parents. Some authors [10] are of the opinion that the mutagenic effect of the environment may become manifested in “shattered hereditary traits” which may, in particular, be displayed in an increased proportion of borderline values in the distribution of polygenic anthropometric signs. Such is, on the whole, the picture that we observe when we assess the health status of infants born to exposed parents.

Table 8.1. Anthropometric Parameters of Newborns.

Parameters	**Parents with CRS**	**Exposed Parents**	**Unexposed Parents (control)**
Body Weight, g:			
Number of followed-up cases	113	860	592
Mean body weight	3,496 ± 562.1	3,406 ± 474.5	3,389 ± 493.0
Maximum body weight	5,300	5,400	5,150
Minimal body weight	2,070	1,870	1,700
Body Length, cm:			
Number of followed- up cases	43	493	356
Mean body length	52.7 ± 3.7	52.5 ± 3.3	52.1 ± 3.4
Maximum body length	65	62	62
Minimum body length	45	36	36
Head Circumference, cm:			
Number of followed-up cases	14	297	199
Mean head circumference	34.7 ± 1.6	34.5 ± 1.9	34.3 ± 1.6
Maximum head circumference	38	43	39
Minimum head circumference	32	29	29

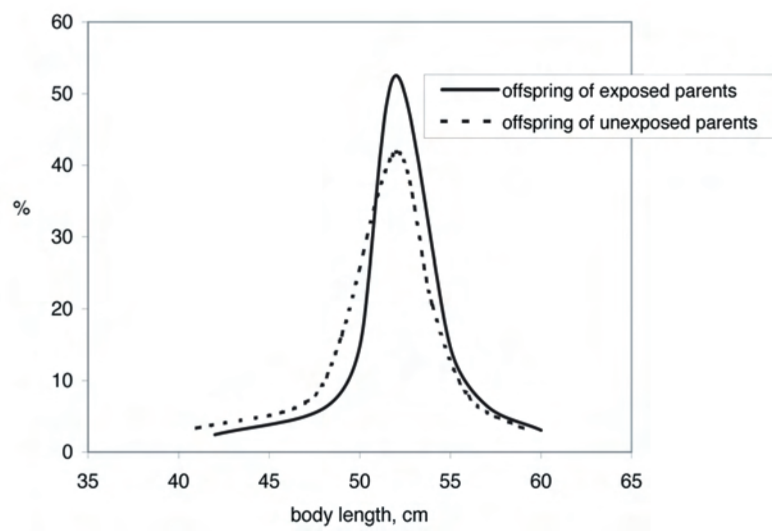

Figure 10. Distribution of neonates by body length.

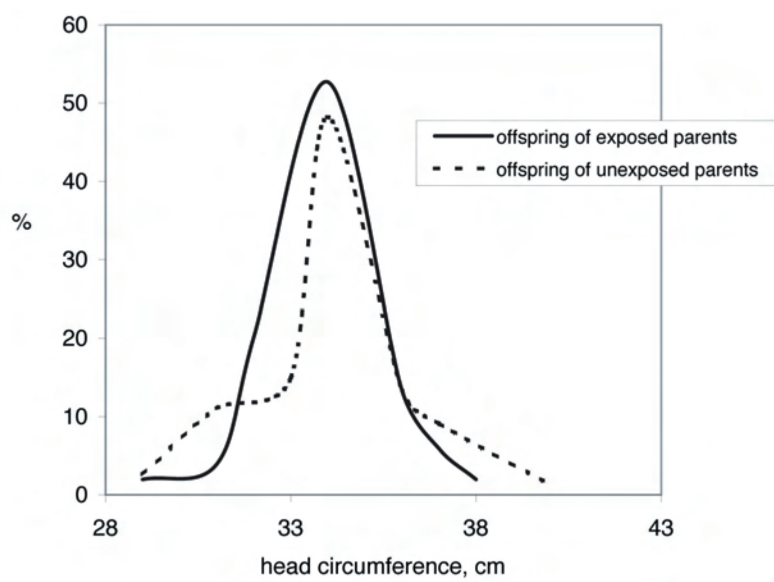

Figure 11. Distribution of neonates by head size.

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Section 9.0 Fertility Rate

It was shown in the previous studies focusing on the health status for the offspring of exposed people [23] that:

- temporal trends of birth rate for the population along the Techa exposed to radiation are governed by the same dependencies as birth rates observed for the country as a whole, i.e., high birth rates were registered in the 1950s and a persistent decrease in the 1960s-1970s, when family planning practice became more widely spread;
- higher (1.5-2-fold) birth rates in the 1950s-1960s noted for the Tartar and Bashkir ethnic groups compared to Russians;
- birth rates estimated for the exposed cohort turned out not to be lower than those for the unexposed control.

The focus of the earlier research was on the exposed population of which patients with CRS were a part; none of the previous studies addressed the task of analyzing fertility and birth rate for this specific group. It should be primarily noted that the exposed cohort includes persons born before 1950, the year of the start of radiation exposure. All those born after 1950 should be assigned to the progeny of the exposed parents. Thus, it is only during the first year after the onset of exposure that all age groups are represented in the Techa cohort. In the subsequent years children are no longer present, and by 1990 persons aged 40 years are the youngest members of the Techa cohort. The Techa cohort is an aging population, and its birth rates cannot be compared with the respective parameters for control cohorts (e.g., the population of Russia), which include persons of all age groups.

It would also be incorrect to make comparisons between birth rates estimated for CRS patients and those for the Techa cohort since the age distribution among CRS population and Techa cohort members turned out to be different.

In view of the foregoing, it was deemed appropriate for the purpose of reproductive function evaluation for patients with CRS to estimate the rate of fertility rather than the birth rate. The fertility rate is calculated as the number of children born within a year per 1,000 women of reproductive age (15-49 years).

In total, 2,376 children were born to patients with CRS. Of this number 974 were born before the exposure started, and 1,402 after 1949. Numbers of children by year and period of birth, fathers with CRS, mothers with CRS, and both parents with CRS, are shown in Table 9.1.

Of the 787 patients with CRS exposed in the Chelyabinsk Region 500 were women. They gave birth to 1,396 children, of which 697 were born before 1950 and 699 were born in the period from 1950 through 1989.

Table 9.1. Birth Years for Children of Patients with CRS Exposed in the Chelyabinsk Region.

Birth Years	Father with CRS	Mother with CRS	Both Parents with CRS
Before start of radiation (before 1950)	204	697	73
1950-1954	119	222	36
1955-1959	141	179	26
1960-1969	216	224	26
1970-1979	116	69	3
1980-1989	20	5	0
Total	816	1,396	164

The estimated fertility rates are shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2. Fertility Rates for Women with CRS, Exposed and Control Women.

Periods of Follow-up	Number of Women with CRS of Reproductive Age	Number of Children Born to Women with CRS	Fertility Rate for Women with CRS	Fertility Rate for Exposed Women	Fertility Rate for Control Women
1950-1954	350	222	126.9 (110.5-144.5)*	139.4	131.6
1955-1959	366	179	97.8 (83.9-113.2)	118.6	107.6
1960-1969	280	224	80.0 (69.7-91.0)	82.3	94.4
1970-1979	199	69	34.7 (27.0-43.2)		
1980-1989	118	5			

* Note: 95% confidence intervals are indicated in parentheses

The fertility rate estimated for the period 1969-1970 was 65.7 for the USSR and 53.4 for the Russian Republic, both fertility and birth rate being higher for rural localities than for cities. Judging by the values cited in the above table, the fertility rate estimated for the rural population followed up by us was not lower than the national rate. On the basis of fertility rates and their 95% confidence intervals a conclusion should be made that the childbirth function was not significantly affected in women with CRS, exposed women, or in controls.

Section 10.0 Sex Ratio

An impaired sex ratio observed among the offspring born after their parents were exposed to radiation is assumed to be a potential effect of radiation [7, 12].

Normally, newborn boys numerically predominate over newborn girls. The ratio is sufficiently stable and is estimated to be 106 boys to 100 girls, on the average [43, 44]. However, sex ratio is influenced by a number of factors, such as age of parents, unfavorable socio-economic conditions, potential mutagenic effects, and in particular radiation exposure.

It was established as a result of sex ratio analysis for the offspring of A-bomb survivors that there was an increase in the absolute value of the sex ratio by more than 4% in cases where the father was exposed, and of the absolute value of the sex ratio by more than 1.6% in cases where the mother was exposed [21].

Potential hazardous impacts of radiation as manifested by effects on the sex ratio are interpreted on the basis of different assumptions. It was thought that radiation exposure may lead to increased loss of male fetuses, since they are more vulnerable to any adverse effects, and, thus, to predominance of girls over boys among children born to exposed parents. At the same time it was suggested that among the offspring of exposed men there may be a shift of normal sex ratio towards a relative excess of sons in case the exposure caused a considerable number of dominant-lethal mutations, which are mostly associated with the X-chromosome and very seldom with the Y-chromosome. There should be a shift towards a relative increase in the number of daughters among the offspring of exposed women due to the loss of male fetuses which had X-chromosomes with recessive-type injuries. [12].

Table 10.1 shows data on the birth of boys and girls to patients with CRS vs. exposure of the father, mother, or both parents.

Table 10.1. Sex Ratio for Children Born to Patients with CRS.

Parameters	Father Exposed	Mother Exposed	Both Parents Exposed
Children Born After Onset of Exposure :			
- number of boys	314	347	46
- number of girls	298	352	45
- number of boys per 100 girls	105.4	98.6	102.2

There were 974 children born to patients who were later diagnosed with CRS but before they had been exposed; there were 492 boys and 482 girls. The sex ratio (number of boys per 100 girls) was 102.1. There were 1,402 children who were born to parents with CRS after they had been exposed to radiation, 707 boys and 695 girls. The sex ratio was estimated as 101.7. The analysis of sex ratio vs.

exposure of father, mother or both parents allowed us to trace an effect characterized by the expected trend, viz., birth of an increased number of boys to fathers with CRS, and of an increased number of girls to mothers with CRS. It should be noted that deviations from the expected trend, i.e., predominance of boys born to exposed fathers with CRS and predominance of girls born to exposed mothers with CRS, manifested itself during the early years after the onset of exposure, i.e., during the period characterized by the highest dose rates (Table 10.2).

Table 10.2. Sex Ratio for Children Born in Different Years after the Onset of Exposure of Parents with CRS.*

Years of Birth	Father Exposed	Mother Exposed	Both Parents Exposed
1950-1959	150/110 (136.4)	193/208 (92.8)	31/31 (100.0)
1960-1969	101/115 (87.8)	116/108 (107.4)	12/14 (85.7)
1970-1979	51/65 (78.5)	33/36 (91.7)	3/0
1980-1989	12/8	5/0	0/0

* Note: 1) the numerator indicates the number of boys, and the denominator the number of girls; 2) if fewer than 21 children were born in the time period under study, the sex ratio was not calculated.

A comparison of sex ratios estimated for children born to parents with CRS, to exposed parents without CRS, and to unexposed parents (controls) is given in Table 10.3.

Table 10.3. Sex Ratio for Children Born to CRS Patients, Techa Cohort Members, and Controls.*

Exposure to Ionizing Radiation	Exposed Persons with CRS	Exposed Persons without CRS
Father exposed	314/298 (105.4)	4,145/4,105 (103.9 ± 2.86)
Exposed mother	347/352 (98.6)	1,513/1,441 (105.0 ± 2.73)
Both parents exposed	46/45 (102.2)	1,333/1,283 (101.0 ± 1.57)
Unexposed parents (control)		26,298/25,389 (103.6 ± 0.64)

* Note: the numerator represents the number of boys, the denominator the number of girls

The control group comprises data on 51,687 children born between 1950 and 1974 to unexposed parents who lived in the same administrative districts as the exposed persons. Sex ratio for controls is 104, which correlates with worldwide standards. No sex ratio deviations associated with exposure of the mother or father were established for the Techa cohort members without CRS. A slightly increased number of boys was born in the early years of exposure to fathers with CRS, and, respectively, a slightly larger number of girls was born during the same period to mothers with CRS.

Section 11.0 Mortality Among the Offspring

The analysis of mortality among the offspring of parents with CRS encompasses the period from 1950 through 1989. Information is available on the deaths of 391 persons (16.5%) out of 2,376 children born to parents with CRS. The number of persons who died before 1950 was 216; during the period 1950-1989 175 persons died. Death certificates are available for 278 deceased persons; information on the death of 113 persons was provided by their next-of-kin (by word of mouth). Thus, of 1,402 children born after 1949, 175 (12.5%) are deceased.

Age Parameters of Mortality

Table 11.1 shows data on the number of death cases among offspring born after 1949 by age at death.

Table 11.1. Number of Deceased Persons by Specific Age Groups.

Age at Death	Number of Deceased According to Relatives (by word of mouth)	Number of Deceased Confirmed by Death Certificates	Total Number of Deceased Subjects
0-7 days	0	2	2
8-28 days	0	17	17
28 days - 1 year	26	58	84
1 year - 2 years	4	9	13
2 years - 44 years	22	37	59
All ages	52	123	175

Of 175 deceased persons who died at different ages there were 103 (59%) children who died at less than one year of age. Death certificates are available for 123 (70.3%) death cases. Seventy-seven (74.8%) death cases among children aged less than one year were confirmed by death certificates.

Dynamics of Infant Mortality

Dynamics of infant mortality (mortality among children under one year) is shown in Table 11.2.

Table 11.2. Dynamics of Death Rates for Infants.

Periods of Follow-up	Number of Children Born	Number of Children Aged Less than 1 Year at Death	Rate of Infant Mortality per 1,000 Children Born
1950-1954	377	45	119.4
1955-1959	346	31	89.6
1960-1969	466	23	49.4
1970-1979	188	4	21.3
1980-1989	25	0	0
1950-1989	1,402	103	73.5

The most obvious finding was a decrease in infant death rates observed from 1950 through the end of the follow-up. During the first decade after the onset of exposure one out of ten children died at less than one year of age. The death rate among infants estimated for the entire period of follow-up on the basis of all sources of information available was 73.6 per 1,000 children born after exposure to radiation had begun.

Infant mortality coefficients calculated per 1,000 live births for the offspring of patients with CRS were compared with those for exposed parents without CRS, and with unexposed persons, by time periods (Table 11.3).

It can be seen that a negative temporal trend of infant mortality was determined both for children representing the offspring of CRS patients and for offspring of the control population. The estimated coefficients of mortality among children under one year and their 95% confidence intervals indicate a slightly higher death rate among offspring of patients with CRS.

Table 11.3. Infant Mortality Rates Estimated for Children Born to Patients with CRS, Exposed Members of the Techa Cohort, and Controls (per 1,000).

Follow-up Periods	Mortality Among Children of Parents with CRS	Mortality Among Children of Techa Cohort Members	Mortality Among Children of Unexposed Parents (control)
1950-1954	119.4 (87.0-159.7)	105.5 (96.4-115.1)	91.9
1955-1959	89.6 (60.9-127.1)	62.9 (55.6-70.8)	69.2
1960-1969	49.4 (31.3-74.0)	29.4 (25.3-34.7)	41.3
1970-1979	21.3 (5.8-54.5)		
1980-1989	0		
1950-1989	73.5 (59.9-89.2)		

(95% Confidence Interval in parentheses)

11.1 Mortality Structure

Death causes were analyzed for 123 death cases for which death certificates were available and which occurred among offspring born after the start of exposure (Table 11.4).

Death certificates were available for 19 death cases registered among children under 28 days of life (neonatal death), 58 death cases among children aged one month to one year, nine death cases among children aged 1-2 years, and 37 death cases among children over two years of age (up to 44 years).

In the mortality structure first place is occupied by diseases of the respiratory organs, second place by infectious diseases, and traumas rank third among death causes. However, the prevalence of different death causes depends to a large degree on age. Thus, among children who died at an age of less than one year infectious diseases and respiratory disorder account for 50.6% of death causes; congenital anomalies, neonatal diseases and conditions of uncertain etiology account, in total, for 42.8%. Adolescents and young persons most often died from trauma and poisoning; there were 20 death cases (54.0%) from these causes. Infectious diseases (6 cases, or 16%) were represented among this age group mostly by different forms of tuberculosis which occurred in the 1950s-1960s.

Table 11.4. Mortality Structure for Offspring.

Death Cause, Disease Classification According to ICD-9	Number of Death Cases at Age Under 28 days	Number of Death Cases at Age from 28 Days to 1 Year	Number of Death Cases at Age 1 to 2 Years	Number of Death Cases at Age
Over 2 years				
Infectious diseases		11	5	6
Metabolic disorders		1		
Nervous system disorders		3	1	1
Blood circulation disorders				1
Respiratory disorders	1	27	3	3
Digestive system disorders		1		1
Complications of pregnancy, labor and postpartum period				2
Diseases of musculo-skeletal system				1
Congenital developmental defects	1	3		1
Separate conditions originating in the perinatal period	17	4		
Ill-defined conditions		8		1
Injuries and poisoning				20
All causes	19	58	9	37

The most common causes of infant mortality are shown in Table 11.5. It should be noted that coefficients were estimated only for death cases for which death certificates were available; actual mortality may turn out to be 25% higher.

Table 11.5. Most Common Causes of Infant Mortality for Offspring of Patients with CRS, Exposed Persons, and Controls.

(95% Confidence Interval in parentheses)

Death Causes, Disease Classes, According to ICD-9	Offspring of Parents with CRS (1,402 persons)	Offspring of the Techa Cohort Members (12,206 persons)	Controls (23,032 persons)
Infectious diseases	7.85 (3.92-14.05)	11.80 (9.94-13.90)	13.33 (11.88-14.90)
Respiratory disorders	20.0 (13.3-29.0)	17.53 (15.22-20.05)	25.44 (23.48-27.62)
Congenital developmental defects	2.85 (0.77-7.30)	2.21 (1.46-3.23)	1.13 (0.74-1.66)
Separate conditions originating in the perinatal period	14.98* (9.27-22.92)	5.16 (3.96-6.60)	4.17 (3.38-5.09)
Ill-defined conditions	5.71 (2.46-11.24)	4.42 (3.32-5.82)	2.99 (2.33-3.78)
All causes listed above	51.4 (40.16-64.60)	41.12 (37.59-44.87)	47.12 (44.25-50.14)

Note: * indicates statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$).

The analysis focused on infant deaths from most commonly occurring diseases including the group of exogenous diseases (infectious diseases and respiratory disorders), endogenous death causes (congenital anomalies and certain conditions observed in the perinatal period), as well as ill-defined conditions. The above-indicated pathological conditions account for 93.5% of all causes of infant mortality among offspring of patients with CRS. No significant differences in mortality from the causes listed above were found between the three groups compared (offspring of patients with CRS, exposed parents without CRS, and unexposed parents). However, one can observe a redistribution of death causes towards an increase in the death rates from endogenous causes among the offspring of exposed parents. It is recommended to estimate the total infant mortality rates from endogenous causes, since they can serve as the basis for assessment of the impacts of unfavorable environmental factors. The estimated coefficients of mortality from endogenous causes were as follows: 17.83 (95% CI: 11.54; 26.39) for offspring of patients with CRS; 7.37 (95% CI: 5.85; 9.00) for offspring of exposed persons without CRS; 5.30 (95% CI: 4.40; 6.33) for children born to unexposed controls. Thus, cases of death from endogenous causes were registered with significantly higher frequency among offspring of parents with CRS than among offspring of exposed persons and controls. The mortality from congenital developmental defects was estimated to be twice as high and that from certain perinatal conditions three times as high among children of patients with CRS, compared to controls. The most frequently occurring perinatal conditions included respiratory insufficiency (asphyxia) and convulsive syndrome. Congenital anomalies were represented by chromosomal diseases (Down's syndrome) - one case, congenital heart defect - three cases, multiple developmental defects - one case.

11.2 Infant Mortality vs. Intrauterine Exposure Dose

Pathological conditions observed among offspring of CRS patients exposed on the Techa can be attributed not only to radiation exposure of parental gonads but to intrauterine exposure of the fetus as well. The antenatal exposed group was comprised of children born to exposed mothers in 1950-1952, a period characterized by the highest annual dose rates. During that period 145 children were born to women diagnosed with CRS. The doses of intrauterine exposure were distributed as follows: doses below 30 mSv were received by 97 children; doses of 30-49 mSv were received by 21 children; doses of 50-99 mSv were received by nine children; and doses over 100 mSv were received by 18 children. Twenty children died at less than one year of age. It was possible to estimate infant mortality only for two groups with different values of intrauterine doses: below 30 mSv and over 30 mSv (Table 11.6).

Table 11.6. Infant Mortality for 1950-1952 by Dose of Intrauterine Exposure. (95% Confidence Interval in parentheses)

Parameters	Dose of Intrauterine Exposure < 30 mSv	Dose of Intrauterine Exposure > 30 mSv
Children born	97	48
Children dying at age less than 1 year	8	12
Infant mortality rate calculated per 1,000	82.5 (35.5-162.5)	250.0 (129.2-437.5)

The most frequent causes of death in childhood were infectious diseases of the respiratory organs. The excess death cases among children exposed antenatally can be attributed to a deficient anti-infectious immunity [45, 46]. The infant death rate turned out to be higher at higher doses of intrauterine exposure; however, differences in the investigated parameters among the compared dose groups are statistically insignificant, obviously because of the small sample size.

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Conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the reproductive function of individuals exposed to radiation in villages alongside the Techa River and diagnosed with chronic radiation sickness. The study of reproductive function was based on the higher sensitivity of generative cells to radiation exposure and the established fact of the development of temporary or permanent sterility as a result of acute exposure to doses in excess of 0.15 Gy [1].

The population of the riverside villages was exposed to chronic radiation, both external and internal, due to discharges of radioactive waste into the Techa river from 1950 to 1956. For some residents of the upper Techa annual doses and/or those accumulated during the first decade after the onset of exposure exceeded 1 Gy to the red bone marrow. Such doses could cause manifestations of stochastic radiation effects. Among 26 thousand persons exposed in the riverside villages on the Techa there were 940 who were diagnosed with chronic radiation sickness. The studies completed in earlier years [29, 30] focused on analysis of clinical symptoms, course, and outcomes of the disease. The present report discusses the reproductive function.

The reproductive function is a system with multiple-level functions, including the function of endocrine glands, maturation of sex cells, fertilization, gestation, birth and development of offspring. In order to correctly evaluate the reproductive function it was necessary to assess the rates of fertility, fetus loss (unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy), and neonatal health status. We met with considerable difficulties in organizing the studies and clarifying the question of whether or not the chronic radiation exposure on the Techa had an effect on the reproductive function of patients with chronic radiation sickness. First and foremost, the application of family planning practice made it difficult to answer the question of whether or not radiation exposure had resulted in decreased birth rates. A great influence was exerted on birth rates by social and domestic conditions too.

The group which was used to study the reproductive function was not large; it comprised 940 individuals. The group included 156 persons who were over 50 years at the time the diagnoses of CRS were established, i.e., they attained the age at which reproductive function is on the decline. The range of doses to gonads was sufficiently wide, from 20 mSv to 1,270 mSv; however, the distribution of doses in the group was not uniform, and the fraction of individuals with doses below 150 mGy accounted for 60%.

It could hardly be expected to find in a small group of exposed individuals a significant increase in genetic disorders, such as autosomal-dominant and X-chromosome linked diseases, the rate of which normally does not exceed 1%. Therefore, in our studies addressing the reproductive function we were guided by the following two principles:

1) the group of patients with CRS was regarded as a portion of the population exposed on the Techa, and radiation effects were studied both for patients with CRS and for total Techa cohort; 2) the rate of multifactor pathology, such as spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, early neonatal death, birth of children with developmen-

tal defects, etc. were analyzed for exposed residents and their offspring.

It was observed on the basis of studies conducted to assess the prevalence of sex organ diseases involved in the causation of reproductive function disorders that the rate of inflammatory affections among women diagnosed with chronic radiation sickness was rather high, 566 cases per 1,000. There is no evident connection of this fact with radiation exposure; no dose-dependent effect has been established. Inadequate living conditions, use of outside toilets, and numerous abortions were among the principal causes which led to a high prevalence of inflammatory processes in female sex organs. In all likelihood, it is to these disorders that the high percentage of infertility, mostly secondary infertility, can be attributed.

Analysis of the menstrual function for those women with CRS who were exposed in childhood showed that cases of delayed menarche occurred among them more frequently than among controls. However, it should be noted that radiation exposure may be regarded as only one of the risk factors accounting for this pathology. Other risk factors which affected the health status of followed-up women included poor social conditions and undernourishment during the first post-war years, i.e., at the time of physical development and sexual maturation. There were no differences in menopausal age for women with CRS compared to controls of matching ages; no dependence of menopausal age on dose to the gonads was established. It is in this respect that the data on women exposed on the Techa differ from those on A-bomb survivors.

Most exposed persons with CRS got married. The marriage coefficient accounted for 98.7%, which was even higher than the USSR's rate according to official statistical data published in 1987. This higher rate may be due to the fact that we based our study not on officially registered marriages but on factual marriages reported by the interviewed people themselves.

The proportion of childless marriages among persons with CRS accounted for a low percentage - 3.64%. The study of past histories of women whose marriages turned out to be childless allowed us to assume that infertility may have been caused by extragenital processes in 11% of cases, inflammatory processes in genital organs in 28%, and possible hormonal disorders in 28% of the cases. It was impossible to identify even a conjectural cause of infertility for 6 marriages (33%). In the infertile marriages a linear approximation could be made with dose accumulated in the gonads, with a positive coefficient of 2.3 % per Sievert.

The status of the reproductive function for patients with CRS was also evaluated on the basis of the number of children born. After the onset of exposure 1,402 children were born. It was impossible to calculate the birth coefficient because of the deformation of the age structure of the CRS cohort as compared to a normal population. It was, however, possible to estimate the rate of fertility for women of reproductive age (13-49) diagnosed with CRS. Women with CRS exposed in the Chelyabinsk Region gave birth to 699 children in the period from 1950 through 1989. The average fertility rate for this period was estimated as 66.4 per 1,000 women, which was not lower than the respective national value. It can be concluded on the basis of the foregoing that the childbearing function was not affected in women with CRS.

As to potential genetic and teratogenic effects that can be associated with chronic exposure to radiation, it was deemed important to study the health status of the offspring and the rate of loss of offspring for exposed persons with CRS. Teratogenic effects could be manifested only during the period of maximum rates of external doses, i.e., in cases where pregnancy occurred in the years 1950-1952, and the fetus was exposed during the entire gestation period. It was theoretically possible to associate genetic effects with radiation exposure of the genital cells as early as the first year of exposure.

The analysis encompassed primarily the incidence of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancy, which included cases of spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, death of newborn children within seven days of delivery, and congenital developmental defects diagnosed at maternity homes. This incidence was estimated, on the basis of the study of labor histories and neonatal development histories, to be 11.6% (95% CI; 6.79; 18.58) for parents with CRS, and 4.31% (95% CI; 3.02; 5.96) for unexposed parents. However, it should be pointed out that conclusions about the statistically more frequent unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies among women with CRS is based on the study of only 284 pregnancies for which records were available. The attempt to approximate the dose dependency of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies among all exposed subjects included in the study resulted in the estimation of the spontaneous rate of pathologic conditions (at zero dose) as equal to 4.58%. The use of the above-indicated method allowed us to identify 3% of additional cases of unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies at exposure dose to gonads equal to 1 Sv. Therefore, the doubling dose can be estimated as 1.53 Sv. It is a rather preliminary and approximate estimation because the dose-effect dependence lacks statistical significance. Our earlier estimates of the doubling dose based on data on unfavorable outcomes of pregnancies in cases of exposure of one or both parents yielded a wide range of doses (from 0.2 to 4.3 Sv) and pointed to a significant uncertainty of estimates [23].

As to the sex ratio for children born to patients with CRS it can be noted that during the first decade after the onset of exposure the majority of children born to mothers diagnosed with CRS were girls (sex ratio = 92.8), whereas a large number of children born to fathers with CRS were boys (sex ratio = 136.4). This can be regarded, with some degree of certainty, as a manifestation of exposure effect, since it is this specific manifestation of altered sex ratio that was predicted on a theoretical basis [12], and was actually observed among the offspring of A-bomb survivors [7].

Physical characteristics of most children born to members of the study cohort were found to be normal. Mean values for body weight, body length, and head circumference in children born to patients with CRS did not differ from those registered among children born to control parents. However, in spite of comparable mean body weights, children born to CRS patients manifested a wider scatter of values, i.e., the fractions of both children with larger body weight and those with smaller body weight are increased, which may be regarded as an evidence of an increased proportion among the offspring of individuals demonstrating inadequate adaptability to environmental hazards [11].

Death rates for children born to patients with CRS were estimated. Infant mortality (mortality among children under one year of life) was 73.5 per thousand,

and it was particularly high in the period 1950-1954: 120 cases per 1,000 neonates. Equally high death coefficients were estimated during the same period for children born to unexposed parents. These processes were a reflection of the impacts of unfavorable living conditions and inadequate standards of medical assistance in the post-war period, particularly in rural localities. No statistically significant differences in death rate were found between children born to patients with CRS and those born to exposed parents without CRS. Among children who were born to parents with CRS and died before they attained the age of one year the incidence of infectious diseases and respiratory disorders accounted for 50.6%; congenital anomalies, neonatal disorders, and ill-defined conditions constituted in total 42.8%. A certain redistribution of death causes can be evidenced with a bias towards increased rate of death from endogenous causes. Congenital developmental defects were observed twice as frequently, and fatal outcomes due to specific perinatal conditions occurred three times as frequently, among children born to parents diagnosed with CRS as compared to children of unexposed parents (controls).

Thus, no disturbances of the reproductive function were detected among exposed individuals with CRS. The cohort of children born to patients with CRS was noted to have a number of specific features which can be interpreted as effects of exposure to ionizing radiation:

- a shift in the sex ratio;
- increased variability of anthropometric characteristics from the mean in neonates;
- an increased death rate from specific conditions occurring during the perinatal period.

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