

**INTERNATIONAL  
HEALTH CONSULTING**

V. Ramana Dharra, MD, ScD, MPH

To: DOL, EEO/ICPA  
Dec 6, 2016

Claimant name: Vina Colley

*Exposure history:* Mrs. Colley worked as an electrician at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion plant from 8/18/1980 to 4/29/1985. While she was on the payroll thru 6/20/1987, due to a disability she was at the plant only thru April, 1985.

In 2011, the IH evaluation noted that her exposure to chlorine trifluoride, fluorine, and nitric acid would have been occasional (probably monthly); her exposures to hydrochloric acid and sulfuric acid would have been at very low to low levels; her exposure to hydrofluoric acid would have been significant due to exposure to HF gas during cascade equipment maintenance; her exposure to sulfur dioxide would have been at very low to low levels. The claim was reopened due to SEM evidence of potential exposure to mercury and uranium hexafluoride which are known to cause pneumonitis. The IH report of 2016 showed her exposure to mercury on a biweekly basis from very low to low levels and her exposure to uranium hexafluoride would have been on a biweekly basis at very low levels.

*PPE:* she states that she worked for 3-4 years without any respiratory protection but after discovering contaminated areas, she wore respiratory protection, gloves, and protective suit. Tobacco history: smoked cigarettes 1 ppd for 20 yrs.

*Medical history:* per the SOAF, the employee's pulmonary edema was first mentioned in the medical records of 2000 from the SOMC medical care foundation. The record report notes that she has a history of pulmonary edema from the 1983 plant explosion with transformers. The SOAF also notes that two prior contract medical consultant reviews did not find evidence that the employee was evaluated or treated for pulmonary edema.

*Discussion:* Pulmonary edema is usually caused by heart failure but may also be caused by direct damage to the lung.

Medical question:

*Please review the attached medical reports and the information contained in this SOAF and provide your medical opinion as to whether it is at least as likely as not that the employee's potential exposures to the toxins chlorine trifluoride, hydrochloric acid, hydrofluoric acid, mercury, nitric acid, sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid, and/or uranium hexafluoride would have been significant factors in either aggravating, contributing to, or causing Ms. Colley's pulmonary edema (toxic pneumonitis)?*

The employee was exposed to a number of respiratory irritants in her job as an electrician. As noted above, acute toxic exposures are a possible cause of pulmonary edema. There is no evidence in the case file that the employee sustained an acute toxic exposure. Also, per Dr. Rhoads report, there is no documentation of pulmonary edema. In the absence of a diagnosis of pulmonary edema, the above toxins cannot be said to have caused pulmonary edema.

Conclusion: after reviewing the attached medical reports and the information contained in this SOAF, in my medical opinion, it is not at least as likely as not that the employee's potential exposures to the toxins chlorine trifluoride, hydrochloric acid, hydrofluoric acid, mercury, nitric acid, sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid, and/or uranium hexafluoride would have been significant factors in either aggravating, contributing to, or causing Ms. Colley's pulmonary edema (toxic pneumonitis).

"I certify that I am an expert in the required areas of medical expertise for the issues raised in this case and this is my objective medical opinion provided in accordance with the DEOIC program procedures and guidelines. I also certify that I neither have now, nor have had in the past, any relationship with the claimant, his/her physicians, their attorneys, representatives or any employee, employer, manufacturer or entity that may be connected with this case that would influence my opinion in any way. I also certify that my opinion was not influenced by any financial consideration that may benefit me, my family or my heirs."

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions on the above.

Sincerely,



V. Ramana Dhara, MD, ScD

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.emedicinehealth.com/pulmonary\\_edema/page2\\_em.htm](http://www.emedicinehealth.com/pulmonary_edema/page2_em.htm)

Date: February 3, 2017

US Department of Labor/DDEOIC  
Final Adjudication Branch  
DOL DEEOIC Central Mail Room  
PO Box 8306  
London, KY 40742-8306  
Telephone: (866) 538-8143

Employee: Vina K. Colley  
CASE ID Number: 4269

Dear FAB,

This is to formally document my objection to the Recommendation Decision on my claim letter, dated December 28, 2016. The basis of my objection is due to the inaccuracies in the documents leveraged by Dr. Dhara recommendation letter to DOL, EEOICPA, dated Dec 6, 2016 (attachment 1). In addition to this written objection, I am requesting an informal oral hearing to discuss my objections. Due to my medical condition, I am requesting a telephone hearing, vice personal appearance.

The following are examples of inaccuracies used by Dr. Dhara in denying me of my medical compensation:

1. Dr. Dhara claims that I worked at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion plant.  
I have never worked at the Paducah, Ky plant. I was employed at the Piketon, Oh plant; 8/18/1980 to 4/29/1985.
2. Dr. Dhara claims I smoked one pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years.  
I have never smoked cigarettes in my life and if there is any mention in my medical records stating otherwise, it is false.
3. Per Dr. Dhara letter: he states a Dr. Rhoads report as not having any documents of pulmonary edema. In the absence of a diagnosis (ie, documentation), my claimed toxic exposure could not be verified. **However**, I have been treated and currently still in treatment for pulmonary edema for nearly 30 years. Also, Dr Rhoads report was declared not creditable in 2008 by Dr. Marvin Resnikoff and DOL's third party doctor Christopher R. Brigham. MD. Please see attached letter from Christopher R. Brigham. MD. from California August 25, 2008 (attach 2).

4. As time has revealed, my original worker compensation claim did not contain the full list of toxins due to lack of full understanding of the environment. However, Dr Dhara letter points out additional toxins that I was exposed but without consideration as to potential cause of my current pulmonary condition.

Bottom-line: Dr Dhara's recommendation was based on inaccurate data and documentation long since rebutted, yet is used to deny my claim. Having discussed my situation with many fellow workers, my injustice is too common among Nuclear workers. This is a National problem not just a local problem.

Sincerely,

Vina Colley  
(740) 357-8916

Attachments:

1. December 6, 2016 ltr
2. August 25, 2008 ltr