

PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES SHARE THE FINDINGS OF THEIR INVESTIGATION ON CASES OF CANCER IN GROS-MÉCATINA

Baie-Comeau, February 16th, 2021 – The Direction de santé publique de la Côte-Nord has completed its investigation, whose objective was to determine the existence of a significant excess in the cases of brain cancer in the population of Gros-Mécatina and suggest hypotheses or identify causes that could explain it.

While the investigation confirmed the presence of a significant excess in cases of brain cancer (4 cases in 10 years) between 2006 and 2015, public health authorities find no greater risk in currently living in Gros-Mécatina than anywhere else in Québec. The investigation identified potential sources of past exposure to some contaminants, without being able to demonstrate a causal link. The excess in cancer cases during this period is possibly only due to chance occurrence, which is a frequent hypothesis in this type of investigation.

Following a report from the mayor of Gros-Mécatina about the seemingly high number of cases of brain cancer in its residents, the investigation followed various steps. First, people who suffered from brain cancer, or their relatives, answered a questionnaire that included questions about their lifestyle habits and their health history.

Then, the investigation analyzed potential sources of exposure, current or past, related to the traditional diet (shellfish and seafood), drinking water wells and X-ray equipment, among other things.

Recommendations

As a precaution, the Direction de santé publique recommends that the population reduce its exposure to contaminants in general, including:

- Avoid drinking water from Lac de l'Aqueduc;
- Avoid consuming the eggs of wild birds, and eating the liver, viscera and fat of wild animals.

However, eating fish meat is recommended because of its health benefits.

Even though no new case of primary brain cancer was reported since the investigation began in 2015, the Direction de santé publique will continue to monitor the appearance of new cases and will restart the investigation if the situation so requires.

- 30 -

Source: Pascal Paradis
Communication advisor
Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Côte-Nord
418 589-9845, ext. 342268