Background

In August 2019, January 2020, and March 2020 the state health department analyzed cancers in an area around a former railroad creosote treatment facility in Houston because of community concerns. In August 2020, a group of scientists and community members asked the state health department to analyze additional cancer(s) in this area.

What We Did

The group told us about the health concerns of people living in these areas. To figure out if the number of cancer cases in this area were higher or lower than expected in Texas, we did the following:

- Analyzed one type of adult (ages 20 years and older) cancer using Texas Cancer Registry data.
- Analyzed the most common type of childhood (ages 0 to 19 years) cancer using Texas Cancer Registry data.
- Looked at those diagnosed with cancer from 2000 to 2016.
- Accounted for differences in age, sex, and race/ethnicity, which are related to cancer risk.
- Compared the number of cases in these areas to the number of expected cases based on Texas cancer rates.

What We Found

Adult cancer in the expected range:

- Kidney and renal pelvis

Childhood cancer above the expected range, and above the expected range in one smaller part of the whole area (one census tract):

- Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)

This analysis cannot tell us about the causes of cancers in this area. It only lets us compare the number of cancer cases to what we expect based on cancer rates in Texas. The health department could not account for lifestyle factors such as smoking or diet in this analysis.

The health department will continue monitoring cancer in the area, upon request, when new data becomes available.

Resources and More Information

About Cancer Clusters
www.cdc.gov/nceh/clusters/about.htm

What Causes Cancer?
www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes.html

For questions, comments, or requests for the full supplemental report:
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