

Coffee and Cancer Risk: an Update

C. LA VECCHIA^{1,2} AND A. TAVANI¹

¹Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche “Mario Negri”, via Eritrea 62, 20157 Milan, Italy

²Istituto Statistica Medica e Biometria, Università degli Studi di Milano, Milan, Italy

SUMMARY

Epidemiological studies on coffee and cancer risk published after 1990 were reviewed. For colorectal cancer, most case-control studies reported relative risks (RR) below unity. However, cohort studies failed to show any consistent relation. Coffee drinking favourably affects serum levels of liver enzymes, and is inversely related to the risk of cirrhosis. At least four case-control and three cohort coffee studies reported RRs of liver cancer between 0.5 and 0.7 for coffee drinkers as compared to nondrinkers. Coffee drinking has also been favourably related to the risk of oral and esophageal cancers, but the evidence is scanty. Coffee drinkers have higher RRs of bladder cancer as compared to nondrinkers, in the absence however of any dose or duration risk relation. Available evidence on pancreatic, as well as on several other cancers including lung, breast, ovary, prostate and lymphoid neoplasms allows to exclude any consistent relation with coffee drinking.