



Australian Government

ansto

Nuclear-based science benefiting all Australians

Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation

Media release

19 March 2010

Are small amounts of radiation potentially bad for you?

One of the longest held tenets of nuclear physics - that all doses of radiation are potentially harmful to human health – is being challenged by increasing numbers of scientists.

One prominent scientist who is arguing against this long held theory - known as Linear No-Threshold Theory (LNT) - is Dr Ron Mitchel, the latest speaker at ANSTO's Distinguished Lecture Series. The public are welcome to attend the lecture in the AINSE theatre, Lucas Heights at 11.15 am on Monday, 22 March.

Since humans are surrounded by ionising radiation from many natural sources for every day of their lives, this subject goes to the heart of our understanding of nuclear physics and is a hot topic amongst health professionals.

Dr Mitchel explains: "This talk will compare the assumptions and risk predictions of that hypothesis with the actual biological outcomes of low dose exposures. The evidence will show that the assumptions and predictions of the system are inconsistent with the data at low doses. Low doses induce adaptive responses that can reduce risk below spontaneous levels. A new approach to radiation protection at low doses is required."

Researcher Emeritus at the Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Dr Mitchel is a recipient of the WB Lewis Medal, the highest honour of the Canadian Nuclear Society and Canadian Nuclear Association. He is currently researching the effects of low doses of radiation on heart disease.

For media information please call ANSTO Media Officer, Gavin Atkins (02) 9717 9208 or 0448 164 844.