

The Radiological Accident in Goiânia

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Abstract

In late 1985, a private radiotherapy institute located in the city of Goiania, Brazil moved to new premises taking their ^{60}Co teletherapy unit but leaving in place a ^{137}Cs unit, without notifying the Brazilian licensing authority as required by law.

The old building was then partly demolished and the ^{137}Cs source became insecure. On September 13th 1987 two people entered, found some scrap metal value, removed the source assembly from the radiation head, took it home and tried to dismantle it. As a result, the source was ruptured causing environmental contamination and external and internal exposure of several persons. Four people died due to very high radiation doses.

This seminar will focus on describing how the accident was discovered, how it has evolved, and how it was controlled according to official sources in the literature, as well as providing personal experiences by the presenter, who participated as a lead member of the radiation dose assessments team. Detailed aspects of individual monitoring and medical care to the victims will also be presented.