



New Zealand doctor starts smoking in protest December 29, 2006

A New Zealand doctor has taken a "stupid step" as he has started smoking in protest of a three-day strike being held by radiographers.

Doctor Chris Wynne, clinical director of radiation oncology at Christchurch Hospital and a senior cancer treatment specialist, has described his actions as stupid but has said that this was the only action he could take to highlight that around 250 cancer patients are going to suffer during the strikes. Dr Wynne said: "I've tried everything sensible so now I am doing something stupid. Appealing to common sense hasn't solved these strikes."

The national secretary of the radiation therapists union sympathises with Dr Wynne. Deborah Powell, said: "I agree with him [Dr Wynne] that this situation is stupid and I can understand his feelings of frustration because we are frustrated too."

The strike is over pay disputes and is due for January 9, 2007 and will last for three days. But Dr Wynne disagrees that the strikes are over pay because: "The doctors have said if they tell us what the difference is in the money we will make it up, so it isn't even about the money any more." Dr Wynne said that no one responded to the offer.

Ms Powell said: "However, the problem is the DHBs [District Health

Boards] and their offer. We are losing staff to Australia because pay and working conditions are better and we need to change that. If this doctor [Dr Wynne] wants to help he should be sitting on Gordon Davies' [chief executive of the Canterbury DHB and national DHB spokesman] doorstep and asking him about money."

"The union and management are so close but they don't seem to be able to resolve this," Dr Wynne said.

Dr Wynne said that he had smoked as a teenager. But despite that he is still going to smoke until the pay disputes are over, "as long as it takes."

Sneha Paul, spokeswoman for Action on Smoking and Health, said: "Smoking is the single largest cause of preventable deaths, so we would recommend he found another way to express his concern. Every cigarette does you damage."

Hepatitis scare at a New Zealand McDonald's restaurant December 30, 2006

McDonald's is asking everyone who ate at a McDonald's restaurant located in Greenlane, Auckland, New Zealand, in December 15, 2006, to go to their doctor after a worker tested positive for Hepatitis A.

Doctor Greg Simmons, medical officer of health in Auckland, said that it is possible for the food handler worker to have passed on the disease during 7:00 p.m. (NZDT) and 2:00 a.m. as he

would have been in the most infectious stage of Hepatitis A and was not wearing gloves. According to a spokeswoman from McDonald's, Joanna Redfern-Hardisty, food handlers are not required to wear gloves but are required to have thoroughly washed their hands with antimicrobial soap. However Dr Simmons says that the infected worker usually wore gloves.

The shift the worker worked was the only one the worker handled food when he was infectious with Hepatitis A.

It is unknown how many people could have come into contact with food that the infected worker had prepared as Friday night is usually a busy night, according to Ms Redfern-Hardisty.

Dr Simmons says that if someone has been infected with Hepatitis A then they will currently be showing early symptoms. Those symptoms include being tired, no appetite, nausea and skin and eyes will show a yellowish colour.

Ms Redfern-Hardisty, spokeswoman for McDonald's, confirmed that no more risk is being posed to customers. She said that it is currently unknown where the worker caught Hepatitis A but has stated that it was from an external source.

The worker has been suspended from work.

If you ate at the McDonalds located in Greenlane, Auckland, on late

December 15, early December 16, then please either visit your doctor or ring the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on 096234600.



McDonald's has advised everyone in Greenlane, New Zealand to visit their doctor after a worker tested positive for Hepatitis A.

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