Quebec anuncia una acción limitada, para proteger a los trabajadores del daño causado por el amianto

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"El gobierno de Quebec ha anunciado oficialmente, que cambiará su ley sobre salud y seguridad ocupacional, para hacer diez veces más riguroso el estándar de exposición al asbesto, para los trabajadores.

Esta es una buena noticia, que se debió haber hecho hace mucho tiempo.

Sin embargo, la mala noticia es que el gobierno tiene la intención de excluir las fibras de asbesto que tengan menos de 5 micrómetros de longitud.

En su informe publicado este mes, la Comisión de Investigación independiente sobre los riesgos para la salud del asbesto pidió al gobierno de Quebec que respete la evidencia científica y tome medidas inmediatas para hacer que la regulación de la exposición al asbesto de Quebec sea diez veces más estricta, es decir, cambiarla de 1 f / cc (1 fibra de asbesto por centímetro cúbico de aire) a 0,1 f / cc, como es la ley establecida por el gobierno canadiense y la de otros países.

La Comisión señaló, que la evidencia científica muestra que las fibras de menos de 5 micrómetros, también causan daños a la salud.

La Comisión pidió al gobierno de Quebec, que examine la necesidad de cambiar su regulación, para cumplir con la evidencia científica más reciente e incluir fibras de amianto de menos de 5 micrómetros de longitud.

Actualmente, el gobierno se niega a cumplir con esa recomendación.

Lo peor es que la Comisión de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo de Quebec *(Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, CNESST),* cuyo propósito supuestamente es proteger la salud de los trabajadores, se opone a la recomendación de incluir fibras de amianto más cortas.

Un portavoz de la CNESST argumentó en contra de la recomendación de la Comisión, afirmando que al negarse a incluir fibras más cortas, Quebec está en armonía con lo establecido en los Estados Unidos.

Estados Unidos es un caso atípico entre los países occidentales, al rechazar la evidencia científica sobre el asbesto y negarse a prohibirlo.

De hecho, el presidente de Estados Unidos, Donald Trump, niega con tanto entusiasmo los daños causados por el asbesto que las minas de asbesto rusas han utilizado su imagen y su nombre para ayudar a vender su asbesto.

Es impactante que el CNESST desee que Quebec se inspire en un país que niega la ciencia sobre el asbesto y que continúa permitiendo su uso.

La CNESST no ha protegido, durante décadas, a los trabajadores de Quebec, del daño causado por el asbesto.

Ha estado, y sigue estando, bajo la influencia de la industria del amianto y privilegia los intereses de la industria, antes que la vida de los trabajadores.

El CNESST tampoco protege a las víctimas del amianto, que piden ayuda.

Los trabajadores que mueren por haber estado expuestos al asbesto, han tenido que enfrentarse a empleadores, que durante años ocultaron las radiografías de tórax de esos trabajadores, que mostraban la enfermedad del asbesto, y que se negaron a pagar la indemnización otorgada por la CNESST.

Gracias al coraje y la determinación de una mujer, Sylvie Provost, cuyo padre, Réjean Provost, murió de asbestosis en 2017, un tribunal laboral de Quebec ordenó a la empresa para la que trabajaba su padre, Kronos, que pagara 160.000 dólares a la familia.

Había amianto en todas partes de la fábrica, incluso en las muestras de polvo tomadas del piso, afirmó la sentencia.

Otros trabajadores de la empresa han solicitado una indemnización, hasta ahora sin éxito.

¿Cuántos trabajadores más están muriendo sin apoyo? pregunta Sylvie Provost.

El 80% de las muertes por enfermedades profesionales reconocidas por la CNESST, son causadas por la exposición al asbesto.

Es hora de que el gobierno de Quebec demuestre integridad y liderazgo en el tema del amianto, y apoye plenamente las recomendaciones de la Comisión de Investigación, que evitará más muertes por amianto y brindará algo de justicia a las víctimas del asbesto".

Notas de comentarios del traductor

A) - La reducción, por un factor diez, del estándar de máxima exposición permisible, se hace por equiparación a la norma existente en otros estados de la federación canadiense, como es el caso, por ejemplo, del de Ontario.

Nos estamos refiriendo, concretamente, a la adopción, para los trabajos con amianto, del mismo límite de máxima concentración en la atmósfera del puesto de trabajo, que ya rige en Alemania, en Holanda y en Suiza, y… ¡en la provincia de Ontario (Canadá)!, y que Francia se disponía también a adoptar, o sea, de 0,01 fibras por centímetro cúbico, incluso substituyendo el recuento mediante microscopía óptica, por el basado en la

microscopía electrónica, que permite tomar en consideración las fibras cortas y finas, que constituyen el 20% de las presentes en el ambiente.

En efecto, un decreto del Ministerio de Trabajo francés, publicado en el diario oficial en el mes de mayo del año 2012, rebajaba a una concentración media en siete horas de trabajo, a un valor límite (VLEP) no que no podrá rebasar las diez fibras por litro de aire, normativa a aplicar obligatoriamente, a partir del año 2015.

El texto publicado respondía al contenido y resultados de un informe del INRS (Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité), que revelaría riesgos hasta ahora mal conocidos: un método inédito (microscopía electrónica analítica de transmisión –META-), había permitido confirmar que las fibras más finas son también cancerígenas.

B) - Las evidencias científicas que avalan la nocividad de las fibras de amianto, de una longitud igual o inferior a las cinco micras, quedan reflejadas en una bibliografía de la que facilitamos una selección, que no pretende ser exhaustiva.

C) - Otros varios países superan en rigurosidad el límite de uso excepcional (es el caso, por ejemplo, de las operaciones de retirada del amianto instalado -el llamado «desamiantado»-), de las 0'1 fibras/centímetro cúbico, en el marco de una prohibición general de todas las variedades del amianto, crisotilo incluido. Es el caso, por ejemplo, de naciones como Francia, Alemania, Suiza y Holanda, tal y como se ha dejado dicho aquí anteriormente.

D) - Canadá no tiene nada que reprocharle a los **Estados Unidos**, en lo relativo a la defensa a ultranza del uso industrial del amianto, y a la implicación plena de sus sucesivos gobiernos, en el apoyo incondicional -incluso económico- de políticas de respaldo a la extracción, transporte y exportación del asbesto. Véase, al respecto, nuestro trabajo:

El amianto en Canadá: una prohibición harto peculiar
http://www.rebelion.org/docs/242688.pdf

Véase también, al respecto:

Amir Attaran, David R Boyd, Mattew B Stanbrook
Editorial. Asbestos mortality: a Canadian export
Canadian Medical Association Journal. Oct. 21, 2008: 871-2. En francés: 873-4
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David Egilman, Corey Fehnel & Susanna Rankin Bohme
Exposing the "Myth" of ABC, "Anything But Chrysotile": A Critique of the Canadian Asbestos Mining Industry and McGill University Chrysotile Studies
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Pat Martin
Canadian Asbestos Industry: Exporting Human Misery
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http://www.mirg.org/mesothelioma-articles/pdf/canadian-asbestos-industry-exporting-human-misery.pdf

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Kathleen Ruff
It's time for McGill to stop colluding with the asbestos industry
«PREVENT CANCER»
http://www.preventcancernow.ca/it%E2%80%99s-time-for-mcgill-to-stop-colluding-with-the-asbestos-industry

Kathleen RUFF
Asbestos lobby rejoices that Canadian government is financing asbestos wastes project
RightOnCanada.ca E-Bulletins, Fri, Oct 26, 2018
https://rightoncanada.ca/?p=4306

Kathleen Ruff, Right On Canada
Quebec government sets up public inquiry into asbestos and asbestos mining wastes
https://rightoncanada.ca/?p=4388

Traducción al español:

Kathleen Ruff
El gobierno de Quebec inicia una investigación pública sobre los desechos de asbesto y minería del asbesto
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Andrew Schneider
Will Canada Export Death by Rejuvenating Its Last Asbestos Mine?
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Colin L Soskolne & David V Bates
Canada's double standard on asbestos

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Derek Spruce
Logical Insanity: Canadian Governmental Policy and the Case of Asbestos
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E) - Los **Estados Unidos**, a su vez, tampoco le van a la zaga en dicha actitud. Véase al respecto, por ejemplo, nuestros trabajos:

Donald Trump y el asbesto
http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=219253&titular=donald-trump-y-el-asbesto-

Francisco Báez, Paco Puche y Ángel Cárcoba
Amianto: ¿quién mueve ficha?
http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=161012

Véase también:

Barry I Castleman
Asbestos is not banned in North America
European Journal of Oncology. 2006; 11 (2): 85-88
http://www.mirg.org/mesothelioma-articles/pdf/asbestos-not-banned-in-north-america.pdf

F) - Al propio tiempo, otras naciones, nominalmente prohibicionistas, como es el caso de las integradas en la **Unión Europea**, tampoco resultan mejor conceptuadas, a la hora de constatar sus comportamientos reales. Véase al respecto, nuestro trabajo:

Dobles estándares: la prohibición del amianto, no reza para los flujos de dividendos
http://www.rebelion.org/docs/259686.pdf

G) - Parte de la evidencia experimental de la nocividad de las fibras cortas del amianto, corresponde a los resultados de los estudios relativos al efecto mutágeno del crisotilo y de otras variedades del asbesto. Sobre dicha cuestión, véase, por ejemplo, mi trabajo:

Amianto. Efectos mutágenos/genotóxicos, daño mitocondrial y efecto hemolítico
http://www.rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=206266
En inglés: http://www.gban.net/2018/07/06/asbestos-mutagenic-genotoxic-effects-mitochondrial-damage-and-hemolytic-effect/

Una parte de los estudios experimentales publicados, acerca de los efectos mutágenos/genotóxicos, se corresponden con una realidad epidemiológica: el efecto

sinérgico del tabaco y sus hidrocarburos aromáticos policíclicos, respecto del poder cancerígeno del amianto, en relación, específicamente, con el cáncer pulmonar.

El conjunto de tales estudios viene a evidenciarnos que la nocividad del asbesto es una cuestión fundamentalmente química, que poco o nada tiene que ver con la longitud de las fibras o su coeficiente de elongación.

Además, la mera aplicación del Principio de Precaución, nos señala claramente, que cuando un contaminante afecta nada menos que al ADN, *sancta sanctorum* de la transmisión de "las instrucciones de fabricación" de todos los organismos vivientes, eso debiera de bastar para tener que considerar como potencialmente peligrosas todas las fibras de asbesto, cualquiera que sea la longitud de las mismas, incluidas las de cinco o menos micras.

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