

Chernobyl Death Toll: The Price of Cheap Nuclear Energy is Yet Unclear

While Belarus authorities are raising funds to build [a new nuclear power plant](#), the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster are still puzzling the scientists. The British *Guardian* devoted an article to the increased cancer and infant mortality rates in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, which suffered the most from the disaster. The UN's World Health Organisation and the International Atomic Energy Agency (responsible for promoting peaceful use of nuclear energy) report that only 56 people have died as a direct result of the Chernobyl-released radiation and about 4,000 will die from it eventually.

Another UN Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer predicts 16,000 deaths from Chernobyl. Those "on the ground" have different figures – the Belarus National Academy of Sciences estimates 93,000 deaths so far and 270,000 cancers eventually and the Ukraine Academy of Science gives even higher figures. As the *Guardian* explains:

The mismatches in figures arise because there have been no comprehensive, co-ordinated studies of the health consequences of the accident. This is in contrast to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, where official research showed that the main rise in most types of cancer and non-cancer diseases only became apparent years after the atomic bombs fell.

A coordinated effort to study the consequences of the largest anthropogenic disaster in human's history is indeed necessary. This would serve not only Belarus, but many other countries.

One thing is already clear, thousands of human lives is a price too high to pay for cheap nuclear energy. Read the

Guardian article text at [Guardian.co.uk](https://www.guardian.co.uk).

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