



Istituto Superiore di Sanità

SEVESO TOOK US BY SURPRISE

THE INTERVENTION BY THE ISTITUTO SUPERIORE DI SANITÀ WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER IN THE 1976

Interview with
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conducted by Paola De Castro, Daniela Marsili and Sara Modigliani
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The intervention by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità within an environmental disaster in the 1976

The accident at the ICMESSA (Meda Chemical Industry Shareholding Company) industry settled at Seveso occurred on July 10th, 1976. The environmental disaster caused by leakage and diffusion of the TCDD (tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin) toxic cloud affected the population and the territory surrounding the towns of Seveso, Meda, Desio and Cesano Maderno, in the Milan province. The Istituto Superiore di Sanità was involved in various activities (soil sampling, environmental contamination studies, epidemiological investigations) that still today belong to its multidisciplinary expertise. In this documentary some of the researchers, who were part of the Institute expert group, recall their professional and personal involvement. Their stories help us to remember and rebuild, after a few decades, the Institute's commitment in the emergency and its implications for public health, supported by a strong and shared sense of belonging. The memory of these events, which allows us to reconstruct some aspects of that historical period – the mid '70s – emphasizes the Institute's mission and the growing awareness of the central role of the environment-health relationship in public health.

This movie was presented for the first time at the third conference "Storie e memorie dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità - Racconti in movimento" ("Histories and memories of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità - Stories in movement", on September 16, 2010. Duration 30 minutes.

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