Formaldehyde

Student Name

NorQuest College

ENGL 2550 A05

Instructor Name

Assignment 2a: Annotated Bibliography

Date
Formaldehyde

Research question: Should formaldehyde continue to be used in embalming?


In this article, James H. Bedino (2004) discusses the occupational exposure to formaldehyde that is specific to the process of embalming. He examines the choice to use formaldehyde in these procedures despite the adverse health effects it presents to the embalmer. Bedino (2004) provides information from his own studies and presents embalmers with alternative substances or methods that drastically reduce the harmful effects of chemical exposure. Specifically, an alternative chemical called glutaraldehyde is suggested because the exposure levels are barely detectable compared to formaldehyde yet the same level of preservation is achieved. This source is valuable because not only does it provide extensive information about occupational exposure to formaldehyde in embalmers, it explains and encourages the use of a safer alternative substance. I will use this source to provide supporting information about why formaldehyde should be eliminated from the embalming process and embalmers should consider alternative methods. Bedino’s research on glutaraldehyde will be useful in justifying that this alternative chemical is less dangerous than formaldehyde yet equally effective at preserving a cadaver.

In this article, Chiappelli and Chiapelli (2008) analyze everything from the history and legality of embalming to the health-related risks and environmental concerns regarding these procedures. Although Chiappelli and Chiapelli (2008) provide facts about embalming from a variety of perspectives, a strong standpoint is taken against embalming that suggests the health and environmental risks outweigh the benefits. The carcinogenicity of formaldehyde is discussed, as well as the effects of releasing this chemical into the environment via burning or burial. I intend to use this source because it gives ample information about how formaldehyde acts as a pollutant to the environment. The facts presented in this article will be helpful in explaining the environmental impact of the chemicals used in embalming procedures.


In this monograph, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a part of the World Health Organization, confirms that formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen (cancer-causing substance). Information is presented from various case-control and cohort studies in both animals and humans that links formaldehyde exposure to nasopharyngeal cancer, myeloid leukemia, and sinonasal cancer. It is concluded that there is now sufficient evidence to support the carcinogenicity of formaldehyde in humans, compared to the limited evidence found in Volume 62 (1995). I intend to use this source to explain the risk factors associated with formaldehyde exposure, specifically for embalmers. The hard evidence regarding the carcinogenicity of formaldehyde presented in this source make it a useful resource when demonstrating a standpoint that this chemical should not be used in embalming procedures.