

## Tekst 3

# A deadly silence

## Government must be more open

WILL WE ever learn? Eighteen years after the Department of Health promised greater openness about the incidence of cancers around nuclear power stations, we report today the appearance of another frightening cluster near the Oldbury reactor next to the Severn Estuary. Two decades after Sellafield became a by-word for danger to public health, children in the town of Chepstow appear to be 11 times more likely than elsewhere in Britain to contract leukaemia.

This incidence of illness is not only an indictment of successive governments' complacency about the dangers of nuclear power. It is, equally important, testament to the pathetic resolve of politicians of all parties to ensure that public information should reside in the public domain. Cancer clusters are still almost impossible to trace from government statistics as currently published; the figures are too general and cover too large an area. Yet postcode analysis of the incidence of illness, for both cancer and other diseases, could transform our understanding of some illnesses. As always, the stock inclination of Britain's institutions – the Department of Health is little different from any other – remains to disclose as little as they can get away with.

Swathes of important information remain hidden because impertinent public scrutiny is much harder work for public officials than secrecy. We cannot blame this government alone for failing to brush away the patronising fetish for obfuscation of a Civil Service which has never known – or acted – any better. But the Oldbury scandal reminds us graphically that we still live in a secret society.

*'The Guardian'*

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De ondertitel "Government must be more open" heeft in het artikel betrekking op gegevens over gezondheidswesties.

- 1p 4  Welke aanpak zou de informatievoorziening over dit onderwerp kunnen bevorderen? Citeer de eerste twee en de laatste twee woorden van de zin waarin dit staat.