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# Mafia finds new way to kill as waste trade is linked to cancer

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Wednesday, 1 August 2012

The potential cost of the Mafia's booming trade in illegal rubbish disposal has been highlighted by a new study which claims that women in the Naples area are almost 50 per cent more likely to develop breast cancer than their compatriots.

Italian and US researchers blamed the raised cancer risk on the disposal and incineration of toxic and industrial refuse – an activity that is widespread in the Campania region surrounding the southern city.

Antonio Giordano, the director of the Sbarro Institute for Cancer Research at Temple University in Philadelphia, and Giulio Tarro, a senior doctor at the Cotugno hospital in Naples, led the study, which found cancer rates in some towns were up to 80 per cent above the national average.

Dr Giordano said that "30 years of Camorra (Neapolitan Mafia) and improperly disposed of toxic refuse in the zones of northern Naples and southern Caserta" were to blame for rates of breast cancer that were on average 47 per cent above the national norm.

Every night north of Naples, near the towns of Nola, Acerra and Marigliano, hundreds of small fires burn in fields and waste ground, in what is known as the "Triangle of Death". Camorra gangs are thought to be largely to blame as they make millions of euros a year by torching waste in order to dispose of it.

Lucio Pavarone of the region's No Dumping campaign said the culprits chose sites for dumping and burning rubbish that were inaccessible to fire services.

"This is no-man's land," he said. "But this is an environmental disaster of terrible proportions. Some of the nearby fields are used for agriculture."

Previous research done in the Naples/Campania area suggested birth defects of the urogenital and central nervous systems were 80 per cent higher than normal. The incidence of other cancers, including those of the lung, liver and alimentary canal, was 12 per cent higher.

Last year a report by the environmental group Legambiente suggested that in 2010 authorities seized two million tonnes of waste on its way for disposal in Italy's four southernmost regions. It said, however, that Campania, the region around Naples, was the area worst hit by Mafia-linked environmental damage.