

You can learn the course of Minamata disease history

Brief Chronology of Minamata Disease Incident

Year	Event
1889	Official designation of Minamata Village (population: 12,040)
1908	Nippon Nitrogen Fertilizer Co., Ltd. (at present Chisso Co., Ltd.) builds a factory in Minamata.
1932	Chisso starts discharging methyl mercury, which was the causative substance of Minamata disease, to Minamata Bay. (Mercury was used to make acetaldehyde, which is used for vinyl, and mercury was drained with industrial wastewater.)
1949	Minamata Village becomes Minamata City (population: 42,270)
1956	A disease of unknown cause (Minamata disease) is discovered. (The official recognition date of Minamata disease : May 1 st , 1956)
	The administration suspects the disease is infectious, so they disinfect the patients' houses.
	The population reaches a peak at 50,461 people.
1957	Minamata Public Health Center and Kumamoto University undertake experiments on cats. A cat develops Minamata disease after being fed fish from Minamata Bay.
	Kumamoto Prefecture calls on the people not to eat fish and shellfish in Minamata Bay.
1959	Kumamoto University research group announces "Minamata disease is caused by consuming fish and shellfish from Minamata Bay. It is strongly suspected that mercury is the causative agent."
	Chisso begins experiments with cats by feeding factory wastewater, and a cat shows symptoms, although it is not revealed.
	Patients' families conclude "sympathy money contract" with Chisso, which states 300,000 yen should be paid for the deceased.
1968	Chisso stops producing acetaldehyde and discharging methyl mercury. (Chisso had polluted Minamata Bay and the Shiranui Sea since 1932 for 36 years.)
	The Japanese government affirms that Minamata disease is a pollution-triggered disease caused by Chisso Minamata Factory's wastewater.
1969	The first Minamata disease lawsuit starts. (The suit was filed to clarify Chisso's responsibility.)
1973	The second Minamata disease lawsuit starts. (The suit was filed for compensation for uncertified patients.)
	The first lawsuit rules in favor of the patients.
	Compensation agreement between Minamata disease patients and Chisso is reached. (At last, the certified Minamata disease patients received compensation, such as 1.8 million yen for the deceased, full reimbursement of medical costs, and payment for living expenses.)
1974	Kumamoto Prefecture sets up the dividing nets. (The nets were extended to prevent the contaminated fish from spreading.)
1977	Minamata Bay Pollution Prevention Project begins. (The work was to dredge mercury-containing sludge.)

Year	Event
1980	The third Minamata disease lawsuit starts. (The suit was filed to clarify the national and prefectural governments' responsibility.)
1990	Minamata Bay reclaimed land "Eco-Park Minamata" is completed. (The site was built by reclaiming mercury-containing sludge.)
1992	Minamata City declares its creation of a model environmental city. (In response to the lessons of Minamata disease, Minamata City decided to create an environment-friendly city.)
1993	Garbage starts to be collected by type by citizens.
1995	The final plan for the settlement by the national government is decided. (The national government proposed a solution for aiding uncertified patients, who had not received any compensation. Apart from the plaintiffs in the Kansai lawsuit, those who had instituted the suits accepted the solution. Most of the lawsuits and negotiations for Minamata disease had finished by the next year.)
1997	Kumamoto Prefecture Governor announces the Minamata Bay Safety Declaration. (The dividing nets were removed and the safety of fish in Minamata Bay was declared.)
1999	Minamata City acquires ISO14001 certification and starts to create an environment-friendly city based on ISO14401.
2004	Both the national and prefectural governments' responsibility is affirmed by the Supreme Court. (In the Kansai Lawsuit, which was the only pending lawsuit associated with Minamata disease, the Supreme Court affirmed both the national and prefectural governments' responsibility for not regulating Chisso's industrial wastewater.)
	Population of Minamata City: 30,159

*This chronology is based on the pamphlet "*Minamata byo to watashitachi*—for children who study pollution and the environment ", Minamata Disease Municipal Museum, 2005.