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Main Theme: Radiation Education and Radiation in Medical Science

# ***Radiation Safety Management for Crookes Tubes in Education Field***

**Osaka Prefecture University,  
Radiation Research Center,**

Masafumi Akiyoshi

Special thanks: Crookes Tube Project Members in Japan

[akiyoshi@riast.osakafu-u.ac.jp](mailto:akiyoshi@riast.osakafu-u.ac.jp)

<http://bigbird.riast.osakafu-u.ac.jp/~akiyoshi/Works/index.htm>



# What is Crookes tube?

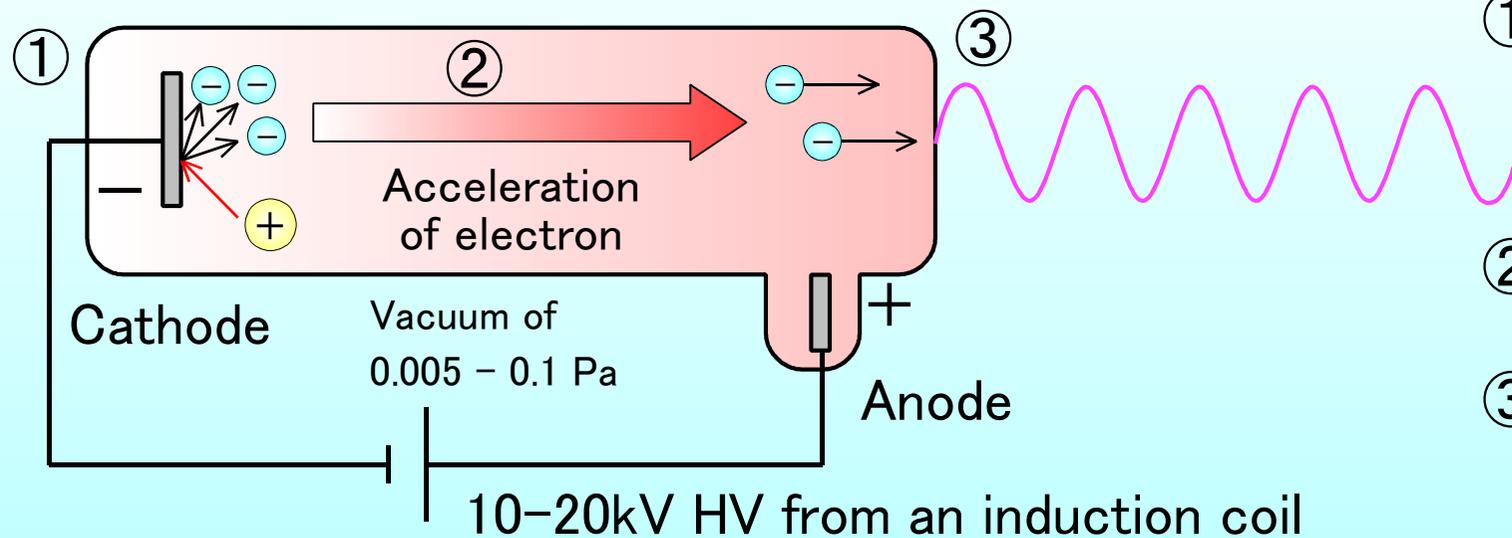
Wilhelm Konrad Rontgen

1895, Found the X-ray during the experiment of discharge tube

1901, Got the first Nobel prize in physics



William Crookes



① At the cold cathode, cation in air is accelerated and knock out secondary electrons.

② These electrons are accelerated as the applied HV.

③ Accelerated electrons hit glass wall and radiate bremsstrahlung X-rays.

# How to Establish Safty Management for Crookes tube?

Crookes tube has been used in junior-high science classes in Japan, and the primary purpose is to teach the **characteristics of electrons and current**, not for **radiological education**. Therefore, some teachers are not recognizing the radiation of X-ray from Crookes tube, and most of them have no information of the dose. However, it is possible to expose high dose of X-ray to students using a Crookes tube, where Hp(0.07) reaches **200mSv/h** at a distance of 15cm.

Some discharge tube that use hot cathode is operated with only several 100V, and even with cold cathode, some equipment can be operated at about 5kV. With this low voltage, radiated X-ray is shielded completely by the glass wall.



A Crookes tube operated by 5kV  
(Horizon Co. VT-7010)



5kV CW high voltage unit  
driven by 9V battery

**Junior-high school in Japan  
have quite limited budget!**

## Basic Plan

By using low voltage type equipment, teachers never required to consider the radiation and students can observe electron beam very safely.

**The problem is resolved completely!**

## Advanced Plan

- 1) Cannot replace legacy devices with economical reason
- 2) Advanced education program that utilize X-rays radiated from Crookes tube

Anyway, radiation safty guideline to limit X-rays dose is required.

# Problems on management of X-rays from Crookes tube

## Dose Constraint for Education Field is not Discussed well

Dose limit for general public have been proposed by ICRP Pub1990/2007 as 1mSv/y, but it is for all additional exposure. ICRP Pub 36 is the only instance.

## Definition of X-ray Device is not Clear

In Japanese domestic law, 'X-ray device' is not defined strictly. There is no exemption level that gives a confusion to safety management of X-rays in many fields.

## Difficult Estimation of Effective Dose

For 20keV X-rays, the half value layer is about 1cm in human body. Absorbed dose to tissues in body depends on its depth from the surface. The transmittance is changed with energy of X-ray drastically around this energy range and the X-rays have broad spectrum.

Further more, dose distribution in horizontal plane is not uniform, so aligned and expanded radiation field is not applied. Therefore, 1cm dose equivalent does not give an approximation of effective dose.

# Exemption and Clearance Level

## For a Radiation source: IAEA GSR Part3

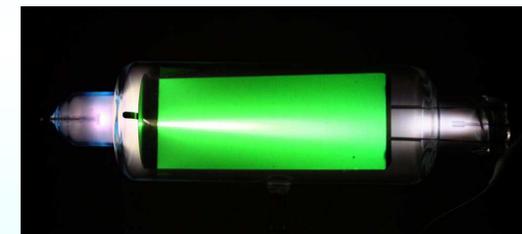
Radiation generators of a type approved by the regulatory body, or in the form of an electronic tube, such as a cathode ray tube for the display of visual images, provided that:  $70 \mu\text{m} ? 1\text{cm}?$

(i) They do not in **normal operating conditions** cause an ambient dose equivalent rate or a directional dose equivalent rate, as appropriate, exceeding  $1 \mu\text{Sv/h}$  at a distance of  $0.1\text{m}$  from any accessible surface of the equipment; or

(ii) The maximum energy of the radiation generated is no greater than  $5 \text{keV}$ .

A Crookes tube operated by  $5\text{kV}$   
(Horizon Co. VT-7010)

Most Crookes tubes radiate higher dose than the clearance level (i).



## For a Public People: ICRP-Pub64, IAEA BSS and NCRP Report No. 180

ICRP/IAEA: trivial individual dose, NCRP: negligible individual dose  
 $10 \mu\text{Sv/y}$  with a source or practice. (under optimized protection)

Achievable level with optimized operation conditions.

### Dose Limit: ICRP-Pub36

ICRP Pub36 Protection against Ionizing Radiation in the Teaching of Science gives the dose limit as:  $0.5 \text{mSv/y}$  (effective dose equivalent) or  $5\text{mSv/y}$  for each organ (dose equivalent), and  $1/10$  dose for each class.

## Problems on Estimation of X-rays from Crookes Tube

### Low Energy X-Rays ( around 20keV )

Not only conventional survey meters for public use, but also reliable NaI survey meters for general radiological management are useless for low energy X-rays from Crookes tube. (below 50keV pulse is ignored by conventional NaI survey meters )

### Radiated in Sharp Pulse

Even using detector with Be window for low energy X-rays measurement, radiation in sharp pulse give pile up and dose is estimated as very small value. Only ionization chamber that measure averaged current or solid detector that integrate the absorbed dose is useful.

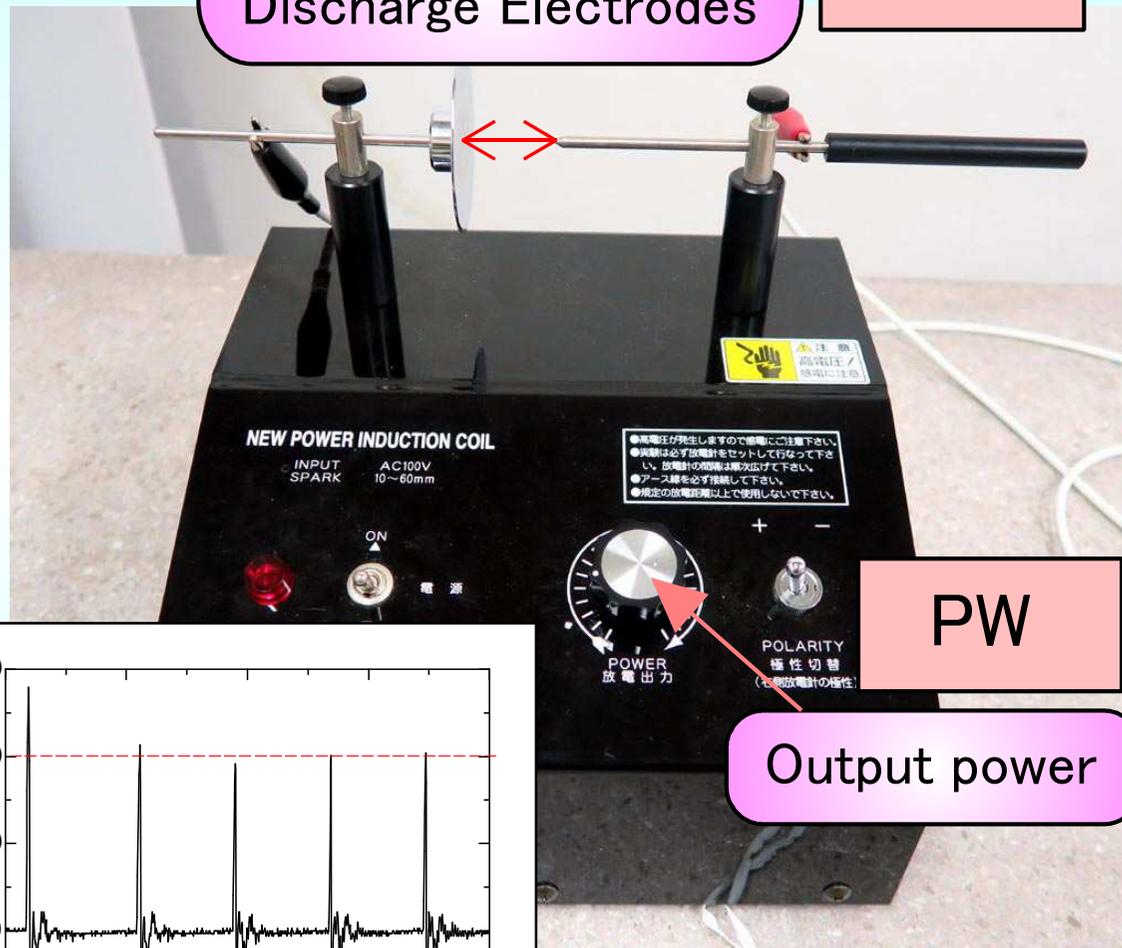
### Not Fixed Applied Voltage from an Induction Coil

Induction coil generate high voltage pulse mechanically, that is affected by electrical conductivity of connected Crookes tube or some conditions such as temperature. Therefore, the output power dial cannot settle the output voltage to a particular fixed value.

# High Voltage Applied by a Induction Coil

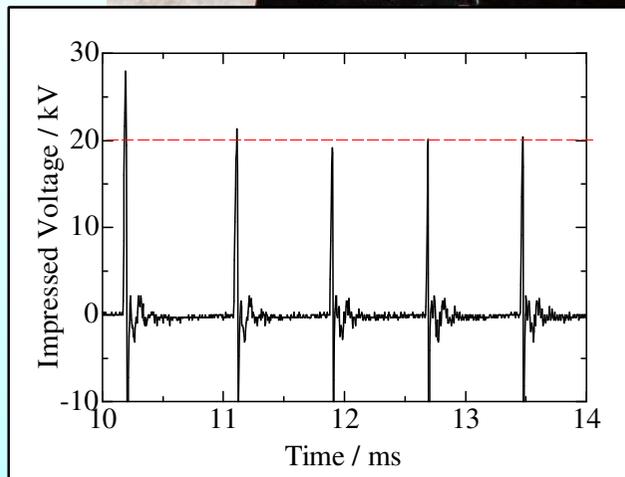
Distance of Discharge Electrodes

DDE



Output power dial changing the voltage impressed to the primary side of a transformer, and that control output voltage, but it **cannot settle a particular fixed voltage**. The output voltage is affected with the conductance of the connected crookes tube or any other factors.

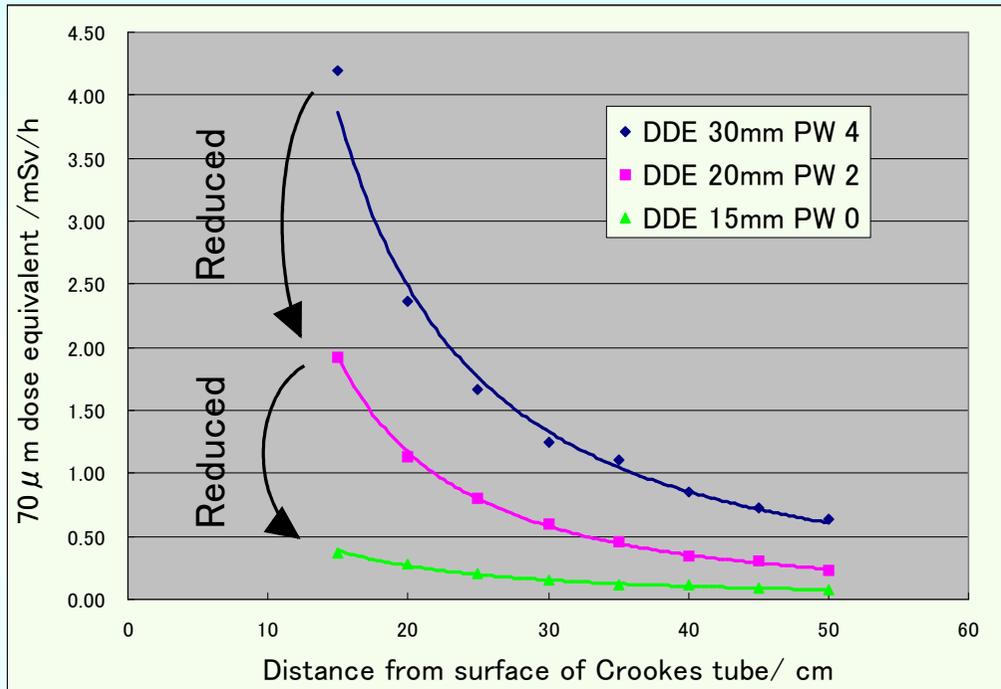
On the other hand, the dielectric breakdown voltage in the air is about 1 mm for 1 kV, therefore the distance of discharge electrodes can **limit the maximum voltage to a fixed value**. If the distance is settled to 20mm, the maximum voltage impressed to a Crookes tube was limited to 20keV, therefore it **work as a safety device**.



Distance of discharge electrodes 20mm,  
Output power 4, Averaged current  $80 \mu A$

# Dose Control

Distance of discharge electrodes: 30, 20, 15mm  
Output power was set to the just firing voltage.



• **Dose is reduced drastically with the voltage limitation**

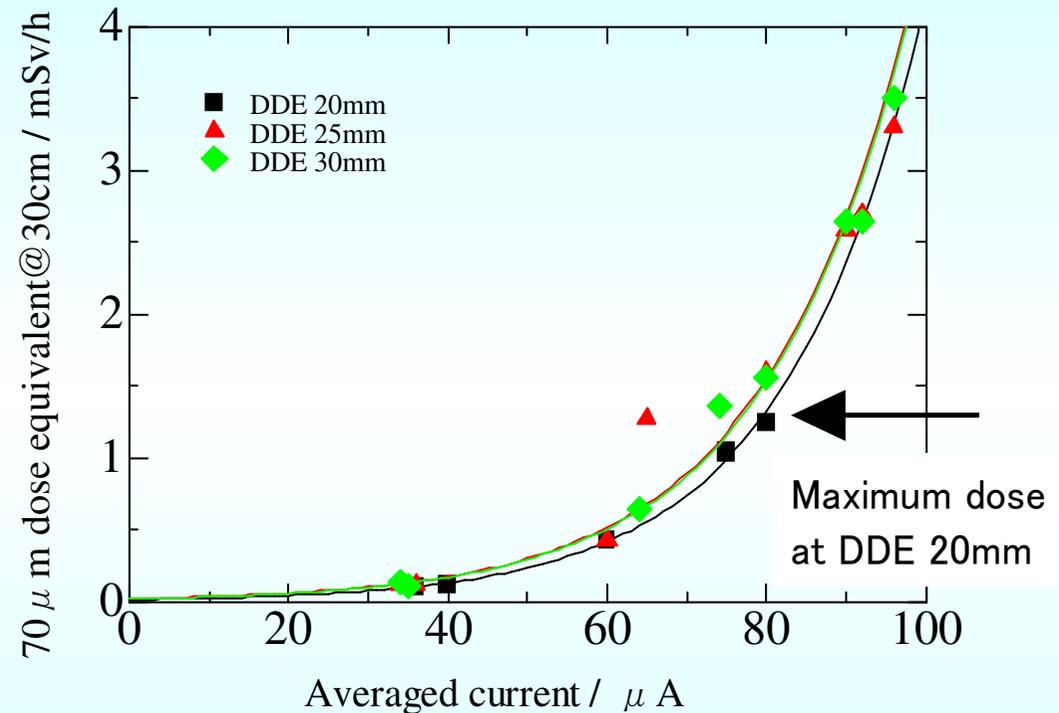
Distance of discharge electrodes must be shorter than 20mm

• **Dose is changed with distance as the inverse square law**

At a distance of 1m, dose is reduced to 1/100 from that of 10cm.

Averaged current was changed with output power.

The averaged current was measured by simple analog current meter.

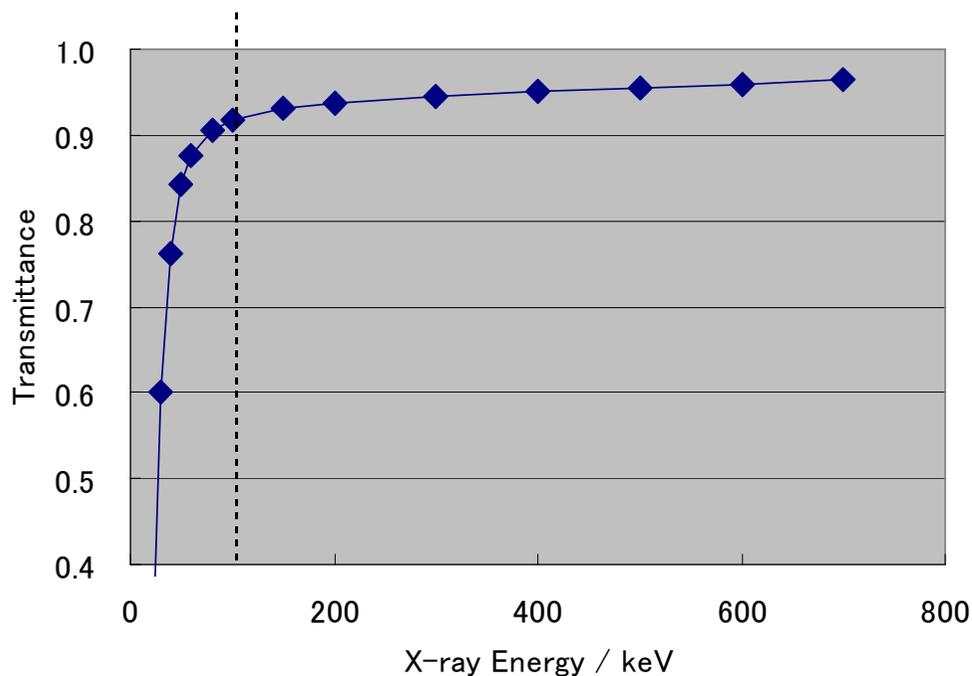


• **Increasing current rising dose exponentially**

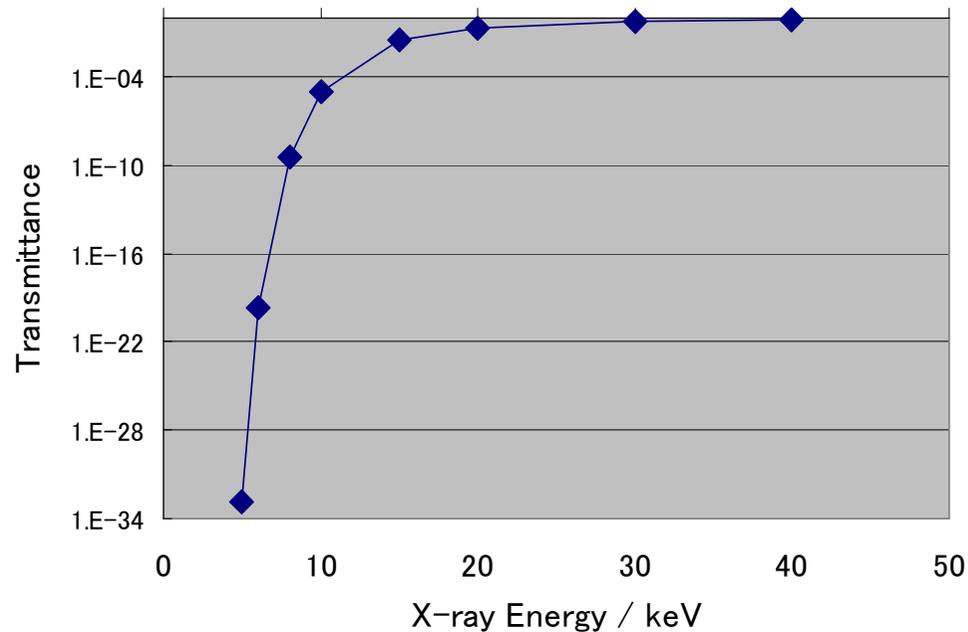
The output power increase current and also voltage. The voltage changes the energy of X-rays that changes transmittance drastically. Therefore, output power must be kept as small as possible. Furthermore, discharge electrode act as a safety valve to limit the voltage.

# Drastic Dose Change with Slight Voltage Change

The radiated X-rays are shielded by the glass tube that forms Crookes tube it self. Slight energy change around 20keV gives drastic change in transmittance.



Above 100keV, transmittance changes slightly



Transmittance at 30keV is higher 100 times than that of 15keV

Transmittance of 2mm glass for X/  $\gamma$  -rays

# Exploration at Real Education Field



Measurements of leaked X-rays from 38 Crookes tubes at junior-high school in Japan were performed using **radiophotoluminescence dosimeters** by science teachers.

The dosimeter were stucked on 2L PET bottle and put from distances of 15, 30, 50cm and irradiated during 10min for each. The radiophotoluminescence dosimeter was Glass Badge type FX (Chiyoda Technol) that can estimate effective energy and can estimate back ground radiation with Sn shielded element.

Setting of induction coil were same as their usually.

In the 38 Crookes tubes,  $H_p(0.07)$  with 10min exposure was;

**31 tubes  $< 100 \mu\text{Sv}$  @ 1m** (extrapolated)

**18 tubes  $< 50 \mu\text{Sv}$  @ 15cm** (detection limit)

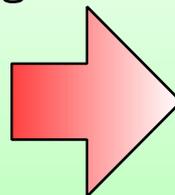
One tube radiate  $600 \mu\text{Sv}$  in 10min at 1m **with minimum output power.**

The tube showed intermittent beam and looks current was small.

Additional study with ionizing chamber: Minimum power, at a distance of 30cm

**DDE 30mm: 2mSv/h**

**DDE 50mm: 30mSv/h**

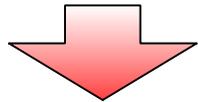


**DDE 20mm: 40  $\mu\text{Sv/h}$**

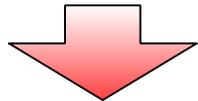
at 1m, 10min radiation gives only  $0.6 \mu\text{Sv}$  exposure

# Character of High Dose Crookes Tube

Inside of the Crookes tube, vacuum is not so high and some **gas molecules** are enclosed. These molecules are ionized by natural radiation and anions are accelerated to cathode to knock out **secondary electrons** (cold cathode).



There is some Crookes tube that **lack of gas**. In old equipment, gas molecules are absorbed to glass wall gently or some equipment lack gas on the manufacturing.



With such Crookes tube, electrons are **difficult to flow** and **more high voltage is required to emit beam**. With induction coil, electromagnetic energy is **charged to the coil until enough voltage** is obtained that applies higher voltage than aimed with the output power. That increase **transmittance** of X-ray to glass wall.



At the age of Roentgen, necessity of gas-pressure control is well known and some "softener" devices were incorporated that released a small amount of gas.

# To Reduce the Dose from Crookes tube

**First of all**

**Replace to low voltage equipment**

10,000 Junior-High School × 400USD / ea. = 4Million USD is required in Japan  
But Crookes tube is used at just a 1 lecture in 3 year.

**Inherent Safety**  
No concern is required

With Economic Factor, Safety Guideline for Conventional Crookes tube is Required

- 1) **Applied Voltage**
- 2) **Beam Current**
- 3) **Distance**
- 4) **Shielding**
- 5) **Time**

Reduce Radiated  
X-rays

Radiation Protection  
Three Principles

Reduce applied voltage gives low transmission of X-rays to the glass wall drastically.  
When we shielding, acrylic is not effective but thin glass is enough effective.  
To take distance is most easy way to reduce dose.

**Provisional  
Guideline**

- Set output power as low as possible
- Never remove discharge electrodes and set the distance smaller than 20mm
- Take distance as far as possible. For student, more than 1m is recommended.
- Keep the display time shorter than 10min.

Is it enough?  
Substantiate study is required.

# Validation of the Provisional Guideline

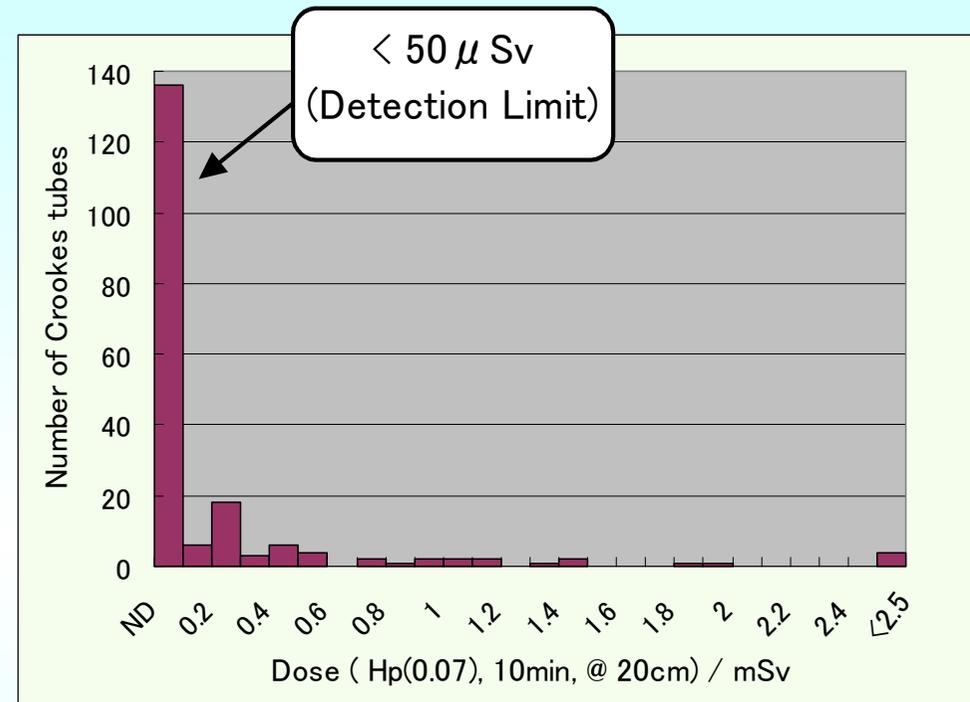
The second exploration was performed at Aug–Nov/2019 to validate the efficiency of the provisional guideline.

August: 95 tubes from 27 schools, September: 18 tubes from 8 schools, October: 67 tubes from 18 schools, November: 11 tubes from 4 schools were evaluated based on the provisional guideline.

136 tubes in 191 tubes:

$H_p(0.07) < 50 \mu\text{Sv}$  (detection limit) exposed at 20cm in 10min.

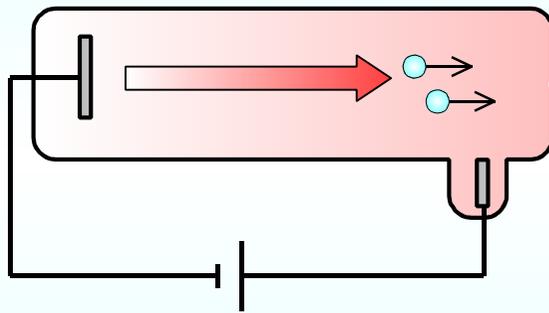
The other 55 tubes showed dose distribution in lower side than the first exploration. On the other hand, the highest dose was 10.4 mSv.



These doses are the measurements results obtained Glass Badge type FX they were put at the distance of 20cm and exposed during 10min, and evaluated in  $H_p(0.07)$ . We have to estimate the effective dose for true students and teachers in the true education field.

# To Estimate Effective Dose

**EVEN**  
At the center of front,  
 $H_p(0.07)=200\text{mSv/h}$  at 15cm



Dosimeter

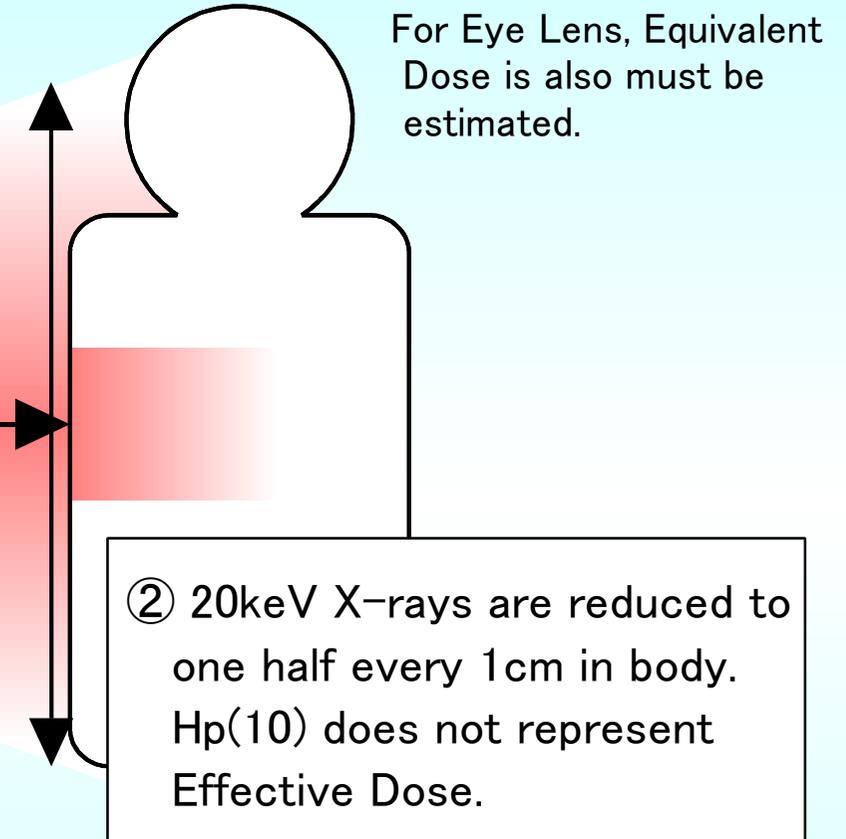
① At a distance of 1m;  
Reduced to 1/44

③ In Horizontally, Peripheral Dose is  
smaller than that measured at the centre  
(50cm shift gives 2/3 reduction)

It is assumed that in 10min  
demo, Effective Dose is  
resulted within  $50\mu\text{Sv}$ .

Calculation with PHITS code using:

- $H_p(0.07)$  or Air Kerma
- Energy spectrum
- Horizontal Distribution



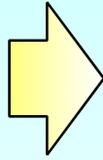
For Eye Lens, Equivalent  
Dose is also must be  
estimated.

② 20keV X-rays are reduced to  
one half every 1cm in body.  
 $H_p(10)$  does not represent  
Effective Dose.

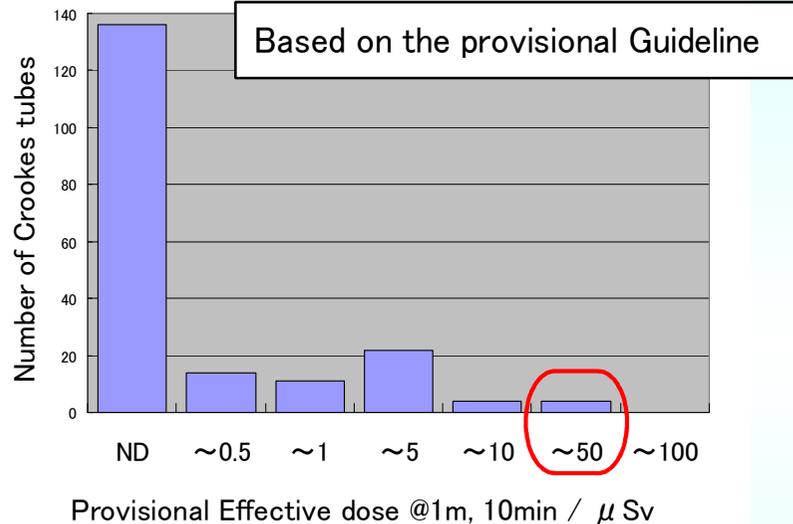
ICRP Pub116 Fig.5.2  
 $E(\text{AP}) \doteq 1/5 H_p(10)$   
 $\doteq 1/10 H_p(0.07)$   
at 20keV

# Exploration at Real Education Field

Raw data by  
Glass Badges

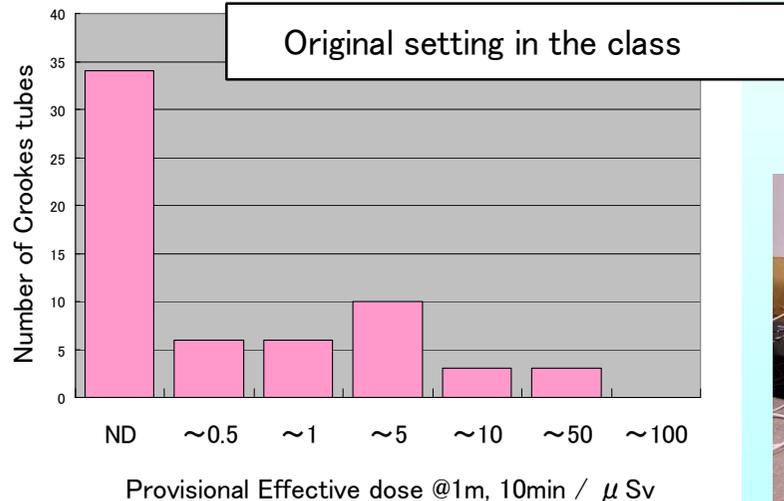


- measurement distance 20cm → students take a distance than 1m : 1/25
- Hp(0.07) @ 20keV → Effective dose : Provisionally 1/10
- Measurement time 10min → Integrated experience time for teachers 10min : Same



The effective dose of the **187 tubes in 191 tubes** measured with provisional guide line were evaluated **smaller than  $10 \mu\text{Sv}$** , that is exemption level of IAEA BSS, at 1m in 10min. Only 4 tubes showed larger dose than  $10 \mu\text{Sv}$ , 3 were smaller than  $20 \mu\text{Sv}$  and the highest was evaluated as  **$42 \mu\text{Sv}$** , that is smaller than the dose limit in ICRP-Pub36,  $50 \mu\text{Sv}$ .

Why several tubes showed a little higher dose is not resolved. Some **screening technique** is now under considering using leaf electrode that is act as open air ionizing chamber or conventional survey meter (with plastic scintillator) calibrated with low energy X-rays.



If it is turned out that the equipment radiate rather strong X-rays, it is easy to resolve it. Take a little more distance is the most easy way. Shielding with **glass aquarium** is also good choice. Only 1.9mm glass reduced dose to 1/20-1/50, but acrylic resin with low Z reduce dose to only 1/3 with 1cm thick plate.

# Conclusion

- Character of X-rays from Crookes tube was **low energy ( $\sim 20\text{keV}$ )** and radiated in **pulse shape**. Therefore, conventional survey meters **shows quite low dose** that gives **misunderstand for protection**.
- **Solid state dosimeters** like radiophotoluminescence badge is good solution to investigate the dose distribution in education field. Explorations in the education field in Japan were performed in 2018 and 2019 using Glass Badge and postal mail.
- Some equipments which hold **few gas inside** radiate **quite strong X-rays** even with the minimum power setting. Then, **Discharge Electrode works as safety device**. The distance must be kept smaller than 20mm.
- When students have a distance **more than 1m** and total observation time is **smaller than 10min**, most equipment gives **smaller dose than the exemption level ( $10 \mu\text{Sv}/\text{y}$  in effective dose)**. The highest dose in the second exploration was  **$42 \mu\text{Sv}$** , that is smaller than the constraint level given in ICRP-Pub36 ( **$50 \mu\text{Sv}/\text{y}$** ).
- Screening method is now investigated.