

## Leukemia cluster among iPhone 6 workers

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**Singapore:** Apple had recently announced that pre-orders for iPhone 6 smartphones reached 4 million within 24 hours. But, there is also a darker side to these brighter figures. In the main production factory of iPhone 6 in Shenzhen, China, 13 workers have been diagnosed with leukemia and five have died so far.

Reports suggest that two chemicals used in the assembly lines of the iPhone and iPad, benzene and n-hexane, are said to be the cause of the cancer cluster. An army of 2,30,000 migrant workers from across China are engineering about 2 million iPhones every week at the factory.

Ms Suki Chung, executive director of Labour Action China, said that the cancer cluster afflicted workers in the age group of 19 to 24. Speaking to news media, Ms Chung noted that the 13 cases were only the tip of the ice-berg and many more had succumbed to the disease.

Ms Chung further claimed that workers were denied medical assistance upon diagnosis with cancer and were forced to pay for their own treatments, which many workers could not afford. Foxconn, Taiwan-based owner of the factory however dismissed the claims saying that those chemicals were no more used in the factory and that there was no connection between spiraling cancer cases and work environment.

A Foxconn spokesperson said, "We can provide evidences that the workers who contracted cancer worked at different

product lines. Majority of our campuses in China serve multiple customers and manufacture a variety of products." Apple said that it is taking the allegations very seriously and has already begun an internal probing into the issue.