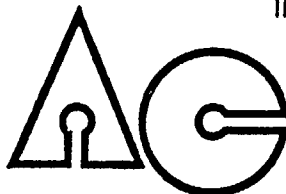


NEWS

from



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOVERNMENT STUDIES SHOW NO CARCINOGENICEFFECT OF INGESTED ASBESTOS

ARLINGTON, VA -- Preliminary results of government-sponsored studies on the effect of ingested asbestos on laboratory animals show no carcinogenic effect.

The studies are being conducted by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) under the direction of the Public Health Service's National Toxicology Program. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has contributed a portion of the funding.

The aim of the NIEHS/EPA studies is to assess the biological (carcinogenic) effects of asbestos fibers which are ingested, or taken into the body through the digestive tract, as in drinking water.

A large number of male and female hamsters were fed asbestos over their entire lifespan. Two types of asbestos fibers commonly used in the manufacture of asbestos-cement products were administered. The doses of asbestos fed to the hamsters were millions of times higher than levels which occur in drinking water consumed by the public in a lifetime, in areas where asbestos occurs in the drinking water. The same number of animals,

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called a "control group", were fed a diet with no asbestos.

NIEHS reports, "There was no indication of major differences in the mortality rate between the hamsters receiving the asbestos diet or the control diet." Preliminary analysis of the hamster data indicates that no carcinogenic or cocarcinogenic effect was observed.

The analysis included thorough pathologic evaluation at time of autopsy, as well as microscopic examination of some thirty tissues from test animals.

In addition, preliminary results of rat studies, carried out in a similar manner, also were reported. The lifetime exposure phase of the study concluded, "... longevity was not affected by exposure to the various types of fibers."

These findings are consistent with a number of other studies of animals fed asbestos in food or drinking water. In 1980, the Health Research Institute at Fairleigh-Dickinson University reported no malignant tumors related to treatment in hamsters maintained on drinking water containing 13 billion asbestos fibers per liter.

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