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A Danger in Dust

SAN FRANCISCO

NEWS CALL-BULLETIN

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Cancer Doctors Find New Worry: Asbestos

NEW YORK — (AP) — Medical specialists pointed a strong finger of suspicion today at asbestos as a cause not only of lung cancer, but also of another form of cancer, rare but fatal.

Known as mesothelioma, this cancer involves the lining of the abdominal and chest cavities.

Much of their evidence comes from autopsies on men who had worked with asbestos as an insulation material.

BUT THEY said it also is possible that dust from asbestos products might be

By Alton Blakeslee

exposing people in general to some risk of cancers.

Asbestos is used for insulation, as a flooring material, in auto brake shoes, and in many other applications. Ordinary wear-and-tear, the specialists said, may release dust into the atmosphere.

The report was represented to the American Public Health Association by Drs. Irving Selikoff and Jacob Chuang of the Mount Sinai Hospital, New York, and E. Cuyler Hammond of the

American Cancer Society, known for his research on cigarettes and lung cancer.

ASBESTOS is a mineral, magnesium silicate. About 3½ million tons are used worldwide each year.

Tiny, hard particles of asbestos can lodge in the lungs during its mining, processing and application, or possibly from dust raised through normal wear, they said.

"We had previously found lung cancer and possibly gastrointestinal cancer were markedly increased in incidence among asbestos insulation workers," they said.

Now they also find a marked increase of mesothelioma, a cancer so rare it is not classed separately in the international classification of diseases.

AS A prime example, they reported finding 10 deaths due to this form of cancer in 307 deaths among New York and New Jersey building trades union members using asbestos.

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