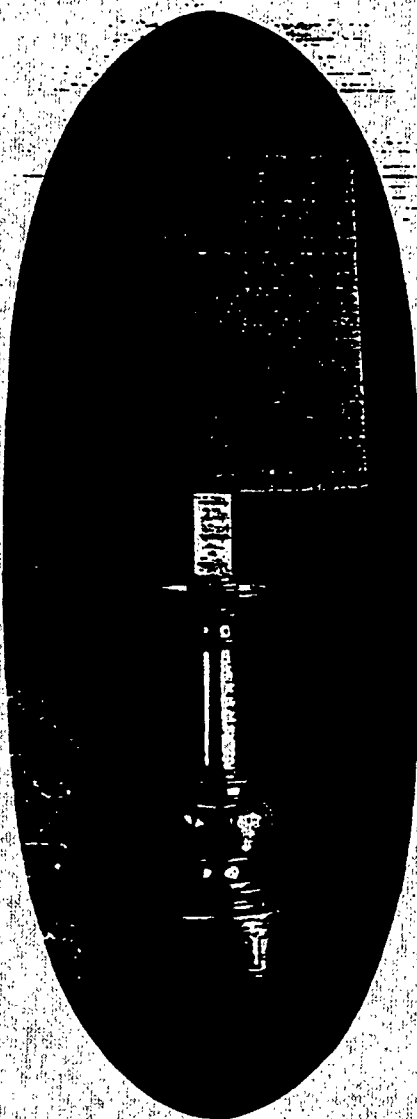




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make the biggest splash. By thus identifying the sources of contamination, appropriate control measures will become feasible. Our plan of attack is to discover where asbestos-associated diseases may occur, and to control the sources in such a way as to eliminate them as a hazard. It must be a team effort, of course, including epidemiologists, basic scientists, engineers, public health officials, and industry and labor."

One of Dr. Selikoff's studies will examine the possible health problems arising from interrupted exposure by tracing thirteen hundred and sixty-seven men who worked at the asbestos-insulation plant in Paterson—closed down in 1954—where Dr. Selikoff's first seventeen patients were employed. Another will look into the matter of neighborhood exposure by tracing and investigating the health experience of seventy-five hundred people who lived within a half-mile radius of the plant in 1942. "The question of neighborhood exposure was emphasized as a result of the mesotheliomas discovered by Christopher Wagner in South Africa, and later by Molly Newhouse and Hilda Thompson in London and by Jan Lieben in Pennsylvania," Dr. Selikoff told me. "Since current evidence suggests that the tumor rarely occurs without a history of exposure to asbestos, epidemiologists consider it a 'marker' disease, and we'll be looking for it when we trace the medical history of the people in Paterson. Incidentally, there's one preliminary indication that leads us to suspect we may find it. In 1955, the proprietor of a junk yard next to the Paterson insulation plant died of a pleural tumor." A third study in Dr. Selikoff's cluster will aim at the protection of relatives of asbestos workers. As in the case of neighborhood exposure, previous investigators of this group had no population base against which to measure the occurrence of the disease they discovered. Dr. Selikoff, however, has a definitely established group to work with. It is composed of the wives and children of all the insulation workers, and their health problems will be carefully scrutinized, especially for evidence of mesothelioma. In Dr. Selikoff's opinion, this study will be of tremendous importance, because its subjects have been far removed from direct exposure. "If the families of insulation workers turn out to be in trouble, the implications will be very serious indeed," he said. "On the other hand, if we find no trouble among them—and this is my hope—we'll be on safer ground. Our observations will also enable us



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