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Call from Dr. Bruce Semple, Johnson & Johnson

May 7, 1975 201-524-5025

Semple responded to my letter to Dr. Hildick-Smith, to tell me of current studies on the effects of talc. There are several reports that will be issued between now and September.

Talc miners and millers in Italy. Chosen for its pure talc and stable population. Paper preprint will be sent in one month. No difference in mortality between miners and millers and controls. More pneumoconiosis in controls, more in miners than millers (the latter indicating that other dusts than talc produce the disease talcosis). Semple thought there may be no pneumoconiosis caused by pure talc, so I told him about the Mount Sinai case report on the man who cleaned ventilation equipment in the condom factory.

A prospective study is underway on millers, dust levels are known, and good ventilation has been there since 1971.

Battelle hamster study... to be presented in September at a world congress, exposures up to 750 times that with normal cosmetic talc use.

I asked about Henderson's work and its implications. He replied that Tenovus lab has been "scientifically discredited" over that work, and Henderson is gone. Problem was background sources of contamination that were not controlled. The work has been repeated with better control. Will be presented in September (Baden).

Semple thinks the relative innocuousness of talc is because of its platy morphology, that it easily picked up by the mucous stream and little is retained in the lungs.