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News from **Ottinger**

OTTINGER

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Congressman Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.) charged that New Yorkers are being unnecessarily exposed to thousands of tons of cancer-causing asbestos dust every year. He said that the dust comes from asbestos sprayed as a fireproofing material at new construction sites and demanded that Federal officials immediately impose criteria and standards governing its use.

Ottinger said that there are no accurate figures on the total amount of asbestos sprayed in New York each year, but as an indication of the volume he noted that each 25-story building requires a minimum of 200 tons alone and 1,000 tons will be sprayed on the two World Trade Centers. (In 1969, there were 25 building permits in Manhattan alone for building 25 stories or more.)

"Experts say that as much as 50 per cent of the asbestos sprayed escapes into the surrounding air where unsuspecting New Yorkers have no choice but to breathe it," Congressman Ottinger charged. As proof of the danger to public health, Ottinger said, "A recent survey in New Jersey showed the instance of lung cancer was 700 per cent greater among persons exposed to asbestos dust."

He said that autopsies performed in three New York hospitals indicated that 50 per cent of New Yorkers already had asbestos bodies in their lungs.

The New York Congressman said that the dust, which is so fine that it can only be seen by high powered electron microscopes, stays suspended in the air for days and floats for miles. He cited a recent study which showed concentrations of asbestos dust 1,000 times greater than normal one quarter of a mile from a construction site three days following spraying.

Ottinger called upon the Federal Air Pollution Control Administration to act under the existing authority of the Air Quality Act of 1967. He said the Administration does not now propose to act until 1972.

"This is incredible," he charged. "Asbestos is the only form of air pollution definitely proven to cause cancer in human beings. It is absolutely essential that the criteria be given the highest priority."

Ottinger praised the New York City Administration for its efforts to control the use of asbestos, but noted that effective control is possible only with Federal authority.



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mesothelioma of the pleura (cancer of the outer covering of the lungs). This coincides with what has been reported in Africa and other countries and correlates with my study of asbestos workers in which mesotheliomas of the peritoneum was found. It is evident then that in the future the problem of disease development and cancer among plumbers will become an important consideration among those employed in this occupation throughout the country.

On the bottom of page 749 is a statement that focusses on the advisability of studying auto workers and related groups in specific operations in regard to the health hazards from asbestos, and opens up an area which had not been previously recognized. Since asbestosis was established, an natural sequence is the question of lung cancer for this particular group of auto workers. The statement is as follows: "Two years ago pulmonary asbestosis was reported in Massachusetts in a man whose occupation included spraying undercoating of cars; the material used had an asphalt base with about 50% asbestos, and he had true asbestosis."

This journal is highly regarded by all physicians in this country and abroad and is read extensively so that there will be a greater awareness among plumbers, auto workers, and all others exposed to asbestos, such as boilermakers, ~~_____~~, etc., which will lead to the further recognition of occupationally related diseases.

Personal regards,

T. Mancuso
Thomas F. Mancuso, M.D.

focusses