

SUBJECT: Asbestos Exposure at Pittsburgh Corning Corporation

DATE: October 19, 1964

1) On this date, Mr. Byrl Stout, Manager of Manufacturing, Pittsburgh Corning Corporation, was brought to my office by Mr. Clyde Ruddick. Mr. Stout came to the General Office on 1 September from Port Allegany where he was the plant manager. He replaced a gentleman who died of a coronary.

2) An article in a New York paper on the 12th of October, Subject: "A Rare Carcinoma Believed on the Rise--A Study of Asbestos Workers Shows a high Incidence." (A copy of this is attached.) This is what prompted his visit to this office.

3) Potential asbestos exposure occurs at two plants, Port Allegany, Pennsylvania and Tyler, Texas. There are about 10 employees at each plant assumed to be exposed. The exposure occurs during the cutting of unibestos which is a pipe insulating material made by combining ground asbestos which has been received from Africa in burlap bags in the unground state with a filler composed of clay and diatomaceous earth and a binder of water glass. The approximate percentages of each of the finished products are 75% asbestos; 20% filler and 5% binder.

4) The unibestos process and plants were acquired from UNARCO in mid 1962. The dust control procedures were very poor. This is of importance only at the Tyler plant is concerned because these employees had worked for UNARCO. Port Allegany plant was a new plant opened in February of 1964.

5) The Kettering Laboratory, University of Cincinnati, performed environmental studies at the Tyler, Texas plant. A copy of this study is attached.

6) The Pittsburgh Corning Corporation consists of three plants. The Tyler plant with 60 employees--produces only unibestos; the Port Allegany plant with 450 employees--produces unibestos, glass block and a couple of other products; the Sedalia plant in Missouri located about 100 miles from Crystal City--produces foam glass products and has 200 employees. The Pittsburgh Corning Research Center is located just north of Pittsburgh in Plum Borough.

7) Various factors associated with both asbestosis and mesothelioma were discussed. It was suggested, assuming that dust control procedures were adequate, no asbestos potential exists at Port Allegany. However, since the Tyler employees had been exposed to asbestos under less favorable conditions, there is a potential of future disability in this group. It was further suggested that periodic surveys of the workers environment be made, i.e., every two years would



be desirable for medical, legal purposes. If insignificant dust exposures exist at Port Allegany and Tyler, it can be assumed that if asbestosis develops, it had resulted from previous exposures. This is an important factor in determining utilization of second injury fund in Workmen's Compensation.

8) Mr. Stout invited me to visit all three of the Pittsburgh Corning plants. I advised that I would work out with him after my schedule with the Coatings and Resins and Glass plants visits had been determined. He further suggested that I make arrangements for environmental surveys with either the Industrial Hygiene Foundation or Kettering Laboratory for some time after 1 January 1965.

A RARE CARCINOMA BELIEVED ON RISE

**Study of Asbestos Workers
Shows a High Incidence**

By HAROLD N. SCHINECK Jr.

Occupational exposure to asbestos may be making an extremely rare form of cancer much more common, according to a report yesterday to the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association.

The cancer is called mesothelioma. It affects the inner lining of the abdomen or of the chest and, in either case, it is fatal. In the general population it is extremely rare, but studies in Africa, where asbestos is mined, and more recent studies of construction workers exposed to asbestos dust in the New York City area show it to be far more common among those exposed occupationally.

The specialists who gave the report expressed worry that the danger might not be entirely restricted to a limited occupation group, but that it might be more general and possibly of considerable importance. There is no direct evidence to substantiate this, they said, but some of the available findings hint that this may be the case.

The report was given by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff and Dr. Jacob Churg of Mount Sinai Hospital and Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond,



The New York Times
Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond

director of statistical research for the American Cancer Society.

Mesothelioma is so rare in the general population that it is not separately coded among causes of death. Yet a study four years ago in an African asbestos mining region found 33 cases, the report said.

Heavy exposure to asbestos dust has in the past been linked with some increased risk of lung cancer, Dr. Selikoff and Dr. Hammond said at a news conference before their talk, but the mesothelioma is another matter.

The group pursued the question by studies in the United States. One of these was a study of deaths among members of two New York area locals of a construction trade union whose members dealt with asbestos insulation. Of a total of 307 deaths occurring in this fairly restricted group over 20 years—1943 to 1961—19 were found to be caused by mesothelioma.

The report called this "an extraordinarily high incidence for a tumor generally so rare." In contrast, they current high study by the American Cancer Society on the effects of environmental factors on health showed that among 31,652 deaths in the general population only three were due to mesothelioma.

A further study of many cases of mesothelioma collected over a long period by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology showed that one-fourth of those specimens that could be tested had evidence of the presence of asbestos.

The worrisome feature, Dr. Hammond and Dr. Selikoff said, is the evidence that asbestos, once taken into the body, stays there. Thus even a single heavy exposure could conceivably produce a cancer after a latent period of 20 years or more, they said.

This idea, for which they said there is some experimental as well as epidemiological evidence, could expand the risk from simply those occupationally exposed to virtually anyone who might only occasionally encounter asbestos dust.

The severity of exposure necessary to produce such a serious effect is not known, the two physicians said.

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