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Johns-Manville

Internal Correspondence

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I am pleased that the Navy Medical Department has approved the use of Poudrage in the treatment of pneumothorax in members of the Naval forces. There is nothing essentially inconsistent between the statement of Mr. McInney and the statement of the Navy. Previous studies of virtually all talcs have identified fibrous tremolite as a varying percentage of the talcs studied. This fibrous component, when of appropriate dimensions and dose, has been shown to induce mesothelioma in animal studies. Of immediate interest is the recent publication by Churg, Warnock and others entitled "Malignant Mesothelioma Arising after Inhalation of Asbestos and Fiber Glass to the Pericardium." This is a case of mesothelioma, apparently arising in the pericardium, reported in a patient who, previously, had been treated for angina pectoris with talc of the pericardial cavity with a mixture of talc and oil.

The critical issue of course is not the pathogenic properties of talc, about which there is a voluminous body of literature, but rather the lack of universal awareness of the potential of these fibers to produce disease in the years of WWII and the two decades thereafter.

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