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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re: "TLVs for Asbestos"

Key words: asbestos, TLV, ACGIH, dust measurements

I write to comment on the letter to the Edi or [Am. J. Ind. Med. *21*:765–766 (1992)] by Warren A. Cook, who died on April , 1992. Dr. Cook indicated that in asbestos-in-air counting after sampling collectio n by midget impinger, a correction factor for the count was used based on the % co nposition of asbestos in the mineral combination of the bulk material. The factor w as used to correct the Millions of Particles Per Cubic Foot (mppcf) count result ng from microscopically counting collected fibers and particles.

I was a student in industrial hygiene at th Harvard School of Public Health, 1955–56, and learned the midget impinger airb rne dust evaluation technique from Dr. Charles A. Williams, a distinguished instruc tor in a course on dusts, their properties, and evaluation. The use of such a correcti n factor was never mentioned. Nor is it noted in the classic text of the 1954 edition of *Industrial Dust* by P. Drinker and T.F. Hatch. I performed extensive midget impin ger sampling in the 1950s and 1960s and never utilized such a correction factor.

At the American Industrial Hygiene Confer ence and Exposition held in Boston, MA, June 1–5, 1992, I personally asked a nu nber of senior industrial hygienists about this factor; all had utilized midget impinge rs to sample for asbestos. Only one had ever heard of the correction factor; none had ever used it.

It is very clear today that the 5 MPPCF r idget impinger TLV was not sufficiently protective of workers. Consequently, it is very important to clearly understand how it was utilized to better appreciate the expos ures and corresponding risk levels of the past. I conclude that the correction factor cited by Dr. Cook was not widely utilized, if used at all, in industrial hygiene pract ce with the midget impinger. Values of mppcf reported in the literature should not be viewed as having been corrected by the factor mentioned by Dr. Cook.

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REFERENCE

Cook WA (1991): TLVs for asbestos. Am J Ind Med 21: 65–766.

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