

Wenger

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

March 8, 1976

Between: John D. Klein, Reporter
Channel 7 News
Washington, D.C.

and

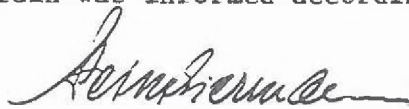
Heinz J. Eiermann, Director
Division of Cosmetics Technology
Food and Drug Administration (HFF-440)

SUBJECT: Asbestos in Talc

Mr. Klein called in reference to the article "Asbestos Fibers Found in Baby Powders" by Marion Burros in the Washington Post of March 8. He wanted FDA's viewpoint on the story, and inquired about an interview with the writer on this subject.

I pointed out to Mr. Klein that the information on the commercial talc products mentioned in the article refers to samples collected by the Mt. Sinai researchers in 1973. At that time the FDA analyzed about 200 samples, and the results showed contamination of some samples with Tremolite but none with Chrysotile (the primary investigation determined Chrysotile but these results were not confirmed by others, including the FDA). During the past three years, the FDA conducted analytical research to develop analytical methods suitable for routine testing of talc for asbestos and continued to survey the market for asbestos-contaminated commercial talc products. In FY 1975, 73 talc products were sampled and tested for asbestos. None were found to contain Tremolite or Chrysotile.

In response to the question why FDA did not recall the asbestos contaminated talc sample and whether there was not sufficient concern to do so, I answered that, obviously, the potential hazard did not warrant a recall, otherwise the agency would have initiated this action at that time. However, there was continuing concern by the agency as expressed through the analytical research efforts and the continued sampling activities of talc products. Mr. Klein then requested an interview with the writer for a public discussion of these issues. I indicated that I would need clearance from the press office. This request for the interview was later denied by the Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs, and Mr. Klein was informed accordingly.


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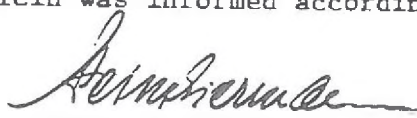
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