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Causes Lung Diseases

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FOR JOHNS MANSVILLE

PROGRAM Lou Adler

DATE May 15, 1970 12:30 P.M.

STATION WCBS

CITY New York

SPRAYING OF ASBESTOS CAUSES LUNG DISEASES

LOU ADLER: New York City has become the first place in the country to take official action against the spraying of asbestos particles during the construction of buildings in densely populated areas.

This move has been taken by administrative feat rather than through the legislative process. And so it appears likely to face opposition, possibly in the courts from building contractors and owners alike.

But the New York action by the environmental resources administration is seen by anti-pollution advocates and many medical experts as being a timely and courageous step in facing the problem squarely.

And the problem is this: Asbestos particles, especially in the form used in asbestos sprays during construction have reportedly been found in the lungs of at least a quarter of the adults who have died and been autopsied in urban areas of the United States and other highly industrialized nations.

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The figure is contained in a medical world news editorial written by the magazine's editor, Dr. Morris Fishbein.

The editorial notes that some medical scientists are predicting that the incidence of asbestos-induced lung cancer will soon exceed that associated with cigarette smoking.

And cancer isn't the only disease the scientists say asbestos particles can generate. Pathologists say the particles can produce a variety of serious manifestations when inhaled. Studies have recently shown that the mortality rate of workmen exposed to asbestos under industrial conditions is sharply higher than that for the working population as a whole.

Asbestosis, a condition similar to silicosis of the lung can develop among the general public, too, who constantly come into contact with asbestos particles in dust from construction sites, floor tiling products -- even from the brake linings of automobiles.

Asbestosis creates a slow degenerative reaction in the lungs. A condition leading to what the medical men call fibrosis, which is the replacement of health tissue with scar tissue. Enough of that and the lungs simply stop doing their job.

Asbestos is used in insulating materials. It's fundamental in fireproofing. And there's no adequate substitute for it, not yet; or at least, there isn't any that's been accepted either by building contractors or by doctors who are concerned lest asbestos be replaced by something equally harmful.

The New York experiment at banning the asbestos spraying is being watched very carefully by concerned experts around the world.

This is Lou Adler.

DPY-57

11:08 a.m., May 26, 1970

Houston -- Government regulations are "essential" to controlling the only type of air pollution definitely linked with lung cancer, a New York environmental medicine specialist believes.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff said airborne asbestos fiber, coming from many materials used in the construction industry, pose a "distressing" and often fatal hazard to men who work regularly around them.

Because asbestos is used so extensively in insulation and building materials, he said, its fibers can be found to a lesser degree in the lungs of almost every city dweller.

Selikoff told the 10th International Cancer Congress that by themselves asbestos fibers trigger both lung cancer and gastrointestinal cancer. In cigarette smokers, he said, they apparently team with smoking by-products to cause extra deadly results.

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1. The first step is to identify the problem. This involves understanding the current situation and the goals that need to be achieved.