

other minerals may predominate and very few of these bodies be due to asbestos. A number of studies are at present being undertaken to recognize the mineral core of bodies found in unselected autopsies, but the examination of even one body is tedious and no definite results are yet available.

The finding that the formation of elastin bodies is a process of impregnation rather than coating raises some interesting queries regarding the chemical processes involved in the formation of all types of ferruginous body. The impregnation of basement membranes by ferritin is a well-known phenomenon,¹⁶ and colloidal iron is used as a stain for acid mucopolysaccharides.^{10,20} It may be, therefore, that some iron-containing molecules have an

affinity for certain proteins, and perhaps some mucopolysaccharides, and will selectively impregnate aggregates of these materials. It has been known for a long time that asbestos body coating contained both iron and protein, but the discovery that granules very similar to ferritin constituted the bulk of the coating material suggested that this iron-containing protein might make up the coating exclusively. One of us (J.M.G.D., 1965), however, showed that some layers of asbestos body contained little ferritin, and it may be that body formation involves initially the coating of the dust with a layer of protein or mucopolysaccharide containing no iron. Later, ferritin may impregnate this layer in a number of patterns to produce either single- or multiple-layered bodies.

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