

DISCUSSION OF PRESENTATION

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- Q. In regard to pleural thickening, which is one of the early signs of asbestosis, how early can it be detected and can it be detected by usual diagnostic techniques or is hospitalization required?
- A. I can't answer the first part of your question as to the time for this to develop, but I certainly think it would be a matter of years, although as pointed out, it is one of the earliest findings. It may be after 4 or 5 years but not after 1 or 2. I think you can assume that. You would not have to hospitalize an individual to make this finding. It could show up as a haziness on a chest x-ray and make one suspect that there was thickening of the pleura. Possibly it would show up in the physical findings too, in that there would be difficulty in hearing the chest sounds.
- Q. Do you have any evidence of internally and orally caused asbestos disease?
- A. As I mentioned, there is now statistical evidence suggesting that there may be an increased incidence of cancers of the gastrointestinal tract in people exposed to asbestos and this would result from swallowing the fibers.
- Q. When you speak in terms of 10, 20, 30, or 40 years, are you speaking in terms of after an initial exposure or speaking in terms of a continuous exposure?
- A. Usually there is going to be continuing exposure during this period but that latent period, as I mentioned, refers to the time lapse between the initial exposure and the onset of the disease. The person may be working with asbestos the entire time, however.