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to recommend whether special facilities should be provided so that insulation workers can change their work clothes before going home to their families."

With the aid of a grant from the United States Public Health Service, Dr. Selikoff and his associates are currently conducting an investigation that covers an even wider range, by studying samples of lung tissue from three-thousand consecutive autopsies that have been performed at three different hospitals in New York City and tracing the work histories of each of the dead people. So far, they have examined two thousand lung samples, and have found asbestos bodies in nearly half of them. According to Dr. Victor Baden, a histologist at the Environmental Sciences Laboratory, from one to five or more asbestos bodies are found in fifty per cent of the tissue slides he examines. Since each slide is composed of seven sections that together represent less than one half-millionth of an entire lung, and since it is widely assumed that asbestos bodies are evenly distributed throughout a lung, the finding of just one of them can be projected to mean that half a million may be present.

Dr. Selikoff and his fellow-epidemiologists do not know whether the relatively small amount of asbestos now being inhaled by the general public carries a risk of inducing mesothelioma, or whether the presence of what appear to be asbestos bodies in the lungs of many people in the general population represents a serious public-health problem. Nor do they know whether relatively light inhalation of asbestos is associated with a special lung-cancer risk in cigarette smokers. "At present, we simply have no way of telling what the dose-disease relationships are," Dr. Selikoff said. "Is it better to have breathed in only fifty asbestos fibres than fifty thousand or fifty million? Does each fibre have the potential of causing a cell with which it comes in contact to turn cancerous? The answers to these immensely complicated questions will have to come from epidemiology over a long period of time. An eightfold increase in asbestos production over the last thirty years would appear to make it likely that asbestos cancers will increase, but only the future will tell. Remember that current cases of mesothelioma must be associated with inhalation that took place twenty, thirty, or more years ago, when world consumption of asbestos was only about five hundred thousand tons a year, and that the neoplasms associated with today's production of over four million tons a

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