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Emmy Lou



"Art started out life as a confirmed girl-hater — then he met one!"

Two Scientists Suspect Asbestos May Cause Some Types of Cancer

By MILDRED SPENCER
Buffalo News Staff Reporter

SAN DIEGO, Calif., March 28—Two scientists, including one from Roswell Park Memorial Institute, have pointed a finger of suspicion at asbestos as a potential cause of cancer.

Asbestos is one of the most common elements in our civilized environment, they told the 10th annual Science Writers Seminar sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Its use has increased a "thousandfold" since the turn of the century, coincident with the increase of certain types of cancer.

Dr. John B. Graham, chief of the Department of Gynecology at Roswell Park Memorial Institute, suggested Wednesday that asbestos "may be a factor" in cancer of the ovary. This disease, which has been increasing steadily in recent years, ranks third as a cause of cancer deaths among women in New York State.

Must Assess Hazard

Dr. W. A. D. Anderson, professor of pathology at the University of Miami, reported finding asbestos fibers in the lungs of 28 per cent of 500 unselected autopsy cases. An increased incidence of lung cancer has been noted for years among asbestos workers.

Both Dr. Graham and Dr. Anderson emphasized that the possible hazard of asbestos "still has to be assessed." But, Dr. Graham declared that there is enough evidence of a relationship between asbestos and cancer to "deserve further investigation."

Asbestos is used in brake linings, electric and household insulation and a multiplicity of other products. We are expos-

ed to it in our homes, automobiles, offices and industries.

"Asbestos is virtually indestructible," Dr. Graham pointed out. "It can be fragmented into ever smaller particles but it is still there. The smaller particles readily pass into the tissues by way of the respiratory tract and possibly by the intestinal tract as well."

"Could Be Asbestos"

Dr. Graham and his wife, Dr. Ruth Graham, have found asbestos fibers in non-cancerous tissues of exposed animals and in man, though rarely in the cancer itself.

They failed to find the fibers in ovarian cancer, but they did find crystals of something that "could be asbestos" in tissue from the ovaries of six women with "borderline" lesions. The crystals were all located adjacent to the lesions.

The Grahams have used asbestos to induce similar lesions on the surface of the ovaries of guinea pigs and rabbits when stilbestrol, a female sex hormone, was administered to the animals, the lesions progressed to become clinically recognizable cancer.

"This would indicate," Dr. Graham said, "that cancer of the ovary may be a two-step disease which does not occur unless both factors are present."

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