FILE NAME: Johns-Manville (JMA)

DATE: 1952

DOC#: JMA083

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letters RE Asbestos for Heart Surgery

NOTED
HMB

A.F.O. MONTREAL
February 21, 1951

Vendiver Brown - General Headquarters, Ext 91

Asbestos Powder for Surgical Use

NOTED
V.B.

Before replying to the attached letter, I thought it would be wise to obtain your reaction.

We would tell Dr. Essel that Asbestos Powder from various deposits in Canada vary considerably in chemical make-up and even from our own mine different batches might vary to some extent.

We could comment on the reasonable uniformity of our Asbestos Powders without guaranteeing any great degree of uniformity.

The question as to what reaction asbestos might have on the tissues is something entirely out of my Department and I am wondering whether we should pass this over, leaving all responsibility with the Doctor if he uses Asbestos Fibre, or whether we should attempt to get some information from Surgeons as to the effect of Asbestos on tissues since we know that considerable experimental work was done with fibre from different Canadian locations.

Any guidance or suggestions you can give us in this matter will be appreciated.

J. C. [illegible]

JCM/P

cc: H. V. Lindell - Asbestos 1858

Att'ch. - Please return

NOTED
HMB

March 3, 1953

William Jay Hazel, M.D.
Medical Arts Building
Salt Lake City 1, Utah

Dear Dr. Hazel:

This will acknowledge your letter of February 5th addressed to our office in New York City. We will be happy to give you that information in our power in reply to your questions.

We are not familiar with USA asbestos. The fibre which we produce and sell is chrysotile. Asbestos powders from various deposits in Canada and elsewhere vary in chemical content and, unfortunately, we do not have data regarding the chemical content of all types of chrysotile powder.

Asbestos Powder or Flours from our own operation will vary somewhat in [illegible] and there is a variation in particle size within limits that is not detrimental to its normal commercial use. We would not be willing to make any representations concerning their uniformity for such specialized surgical purposes as you have in mind.

Asbestos Flours are packed in 100-lb. net paper bags and sell at $43.00 per ton, f.o.b. the mines in Canada. In smaller quantities the price is [illegible] much higher but the freight rate is very much higher.

We have from time to time sent Asbestos Powder or Flour, known as [illegible] number of people for experimental work, entirely at their own request and [illegible]

Dr. Arthur J. Vorwald of Saranac Laboratory is quite familiar with Canadian asbestos fibre and he, together with his predecessor, Dr. Leroy U. Gardner, have conducted on our behalf extensive dusting experiments with animals, using asbestos powders. It is our belief that in connection with these experiments chemical analyses of the materials were made. We would therefore suggest to Dr. Vorwald is in a better position to answer the preliminary questions which you have raised than we would be. Until these important preliminary questions have been answered, we would not be in a position to quote on materials which we could be sure were satisfactory for the purpose you have in mind.

We know that the Saranac Laboratory have ground or ball-milled fibre to reduce its particle size in connection with some of their experiments but on this Saranac would be a better source of information than we.

[illegible] 1 4 0 0 6

[illegible]

[illegible] to make any representations as to the satisfactory or [illegible] of asbestos fibre in a case where the material is to be [illegible] the heart scale.

[illegible] of knowledge of this situation requires extreme caution in [illegible] any statements in connection with the various types and [illegible] of asbestos powders which are marketed for other commercial purposes.

Very truly yours,

J. C. [illegible]
Vice-President

[illegible] Box [illegible]
[illegible] Massachusetts 1880