FILE NAME: Newspaper & Magazine Articles (NMA)

DATE: 1959 Apr 7

DOC#: NMA135

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: LA Times - Cancer Seminar

(missing p 1)

Article 3 -- No Title
Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File) Apr 7, 1959, ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 1985)
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CANCER SEMINAR

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the final day of an American Cancer Society seminar, indicated that smog may have far more influence in causing death in people with heart or asthma conditions.

Occupation a Factor

A new study conducted in California has indicated that several groups of workers, including welders, cooks and commercial painters, have a high incidence of lung cancer. The study was reported by Dr. Lester Breslow, chief of the chronic disease bureau of the California Department of Public Health.

"I agree that cigarette smoking seems to be the major cause of the large increase in lung cancer cases," Dr. Breslow said. "But at least a substantial minority, it appears, must be accounted for by occupation.

"Indeed, the whole subject of industrial exposure and cancer needs urgent attention."

Dr. Breslow examined records of more than 500 lung-cancer patients in 13 California hospitals starting in 1950, and found a higher-than-expected lung-cancer incidence among welders, steamfitters, boilermakers and other workers exposed to asbestos, bridge-crane operators in metal fabricating plants; lead, zinc and copper miners; shipboard engine-room workers exposed to petroleum products; construction painters and commercial and restaurant cooks.

Both industry and labor organizations have social obligations to employees for the development of cancer prevention measures, Dr. Breslow said. Industry fears the costs, unfavorable publicity and increasing governmental regulations which might emerge from more general knowledge of such problems, he said.

Trade unions have sometimes stressed extra pay for hazardous occupation, such as those involving exposures to certain disease risks, rather than emphasizing preventive measures which might be undertaken, he added.

Among the established chemical and physical cancer-causing agents for man, according to Dr. Michael B. Shimkin of the U.S. Public Health Service, are chemicals like arsenic affecting the skin, chromates for lung, nickel for nasal sinuses and lung and naphthylamine for bladder.

Only Two Smoke

Also, ultra-violet radiation, including sunshine, causing cancer after excessive exposure, and radiation from X rays or radioactive materials affecting the skin or the bone marrow. This may even affect miners of uranium and other radioactive ores.

All eight of the specialists agreed that it has been definitely established that cigarette smoking is a major cause of lung cancer. Only two of the panelists smoked and they smoked pipes.

Dr. Breslow emphasized the potential danger of dyes, aromatic amines, chromate ores and petroleum products, including wax and paraffin, which have been associated with cancer of the scrotum.

In modern industry, he said, new chemical processes are being developed almost faster than they can be catalogued, to say nothing of their being adequately investigated for possible dangers to workers.

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