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Cancer Society Sets Study of Exposure Hazards to Workers

Workmen's Compensation Could
Be Affected if Results Prove
Incidence of Disease Grows

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

NEW YORK—The American Cancer Society, with the help of some of the nation's major trade unions, says it's going to conduct a massive study of the exposure of workers to chemicals and other agents that might cause cancer. The million-dollar-a-year study—if its results confirm that some substances commonly used in industry can raise the incidence of cancer among workers—could have a major impact on levels of workmen's compensation in years to come.

As the general public also is in contact with many of the same substances, the study also will look into the relationship of environmental pollution to cancer, the society said at a news conference.

It's estimated that 50 million workers in the U.S. are exposed on the job to dust, fumes, vapors, chemicals and radioactive materials. Some of these substances, such as asbestos and radioactive materials, are known to cause cancer. Others, such as carbon black, benzo-a-pyrene, sulphur compounds, oxides of nitrogen, insecticides and some fertilizers, silicates, some dyes, and various solvents are suspect, the cancer society said.

The basis of the study will be the voluminous death records kept by the unions on their deceased members, some of which go back into the last century. Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, director of the Environmental Sciences Laboratory at Mount Sinai School of Medicine here, said at the news conference that the study would attempt to "define where hazards exist so we can cooperate with industry in removing those haz-

ards." He said industry was cooperating with the study.

Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond, a leading cancer researcher, noted that it would be equally beneficial if the study shows that some suspect agents aren't harmful.

Left unsaid at the news conference was what effect the study could have on workmen's compensation if it can be shown that many workers contract cancer as a result of hazardous substances handled on the job. George H. R. Taylor, executive secretary of the AFL-CIO's standing committee on safety and occupational health, said after the conference, however, that "as more health hazards are discerned, there is going to be an increase" in the number of diseases covered under workmen's compensation laws. Such coverage would increase, he said, "until such time as conditions are improved."

The cancer society said it would make an annual donation of \$1 million to support the statistical side of the study and hoped for donations from other sources as well.

The first union to participate in the study, New York Typographical Union No. 6, noted that its 100,000 members are exposed to the possibly harmful effects of carbon black, metal fumes, lead fillings, and various chemicals, inks and dyes. Bertram A. Powers, union presi-

dent, said the typographers have death records dating to 1904 and also keep complete health records of current members, including a quarterly report on length of exposure to potentially hazardous substances.

He said the union will provide this information to the cancer society researchers and also will attempt to trace members who have left the union since 1963.