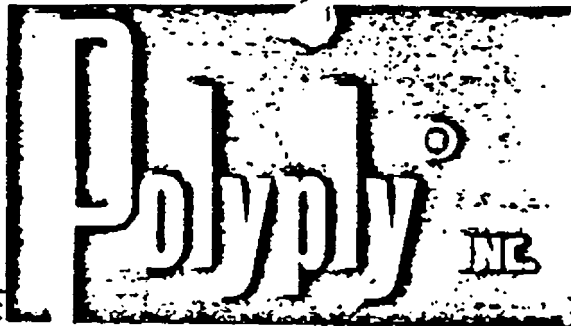


FILE NAME: Owens-Corning (OC)

DATE: 1968 Jan 11

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Newspaper Articles - Rare, Fatal Cancer Is Showing Up Among Those Handling Asbestos with Cover Letter



AMSTERDAM, NEW YORK 12010 • 518-843-3900

January 11, 1968

Mr. Fred Kiel
Owens Corning Fiberglas Corp.
717 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10022

Dear Fred:

Enclosed please find the article discussed during
my visit of 4 January.

Many thanks for the opportunity to visit with you.

Best Wishes.

Very truly yours,

POLYPLY, INC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roger B. Knowles".

Roger B. Knowles
President

RBK/ah

Enc.

Rare, Fatal Cancer Is Showing Up Among Those Handling Asbestos

By Thomas O'Toole
Washington Post Staff Writer

A fatal cancer of the chest and abdominal cavities is cropping up among the Nation's asbestos workers.

So rare that 20 years ago it wasn't even in the medical textbooks, the cancer is called mesothelioma, and seems at most peculiar to people exposed to asbestos.

But oddly, those stricken with the deadly disease include a nurse whose father worked in an asbestos plant and a man who handled asbestos for no more than a month while he insulated the plumbing in his own house.

Any attention the disease gets might come none too soon. More than 1 million tons of asbestos is consumed annually these days in the United States, with more than 3000 separate uses being reported for the fiber. There are at

least 100,000 asbestos workers

in the United States, more than half of whom did not begin working with asbestos until 10 years ago.

In terms of the number of persons involved, the apparent asbestos peril may be even greater than that posed by uranium mines. Last May Labor Secretary W. Willard Wirtz established the first Federal radiation limits for underground uranium mines following disclosure that an estimated 115 men had died from lung cancer in a mining population never higher than 5600.

Mesothelioma was first spotlighted in 1960, when a South African doctor found 82 cases among the people living and working in the Cape of Good Hope asbestos fields. The same doctor turned up 87 more cases in the next two years.

Nobody knows how many Americans have had mesothe-

lioma. Even today, doctors have trouble spotting it — whether they're trying to diagnose it in a person still

See ASBESTOS, A1, Col. 1

ASBESTOS—From Page A1

Fatal Cancer Is Showing Up Among Asbestos Workers

alive or just down at with two sons who worked as asbestos insulators in a shipyard.

But in three separate studies in the last three years doctors have turned up 71 cases. Only 11 of them appeared to have had no real exposure to asbestos. But the other 60 either worked with asbestos or lived with people who did or lived in neighborhoods where the air was heavily laden with asbestos dust.

The first American study was one run in 1964 by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. Tracing the lives of 632 New York area members of the Asbestos Workers Union who were in the union rolls before Jan. 1, Dr. Selikoff found that 11 of them had died by Jan. 1.

When he found that 11 of the 632 died of asbestosis, a long-known but deadly disease (due to accumulation of asbestos in the lungs), he was surprised. He found 11 deaths due to mesothelioma.

But Dr. Selikoff also found that 46 of the men had died of lung cancer at a rate 6 times higher than that in the normal adult male population. Even more surprising, he found five deaths due to mesothelioma.

Dr. Selikoff then launched a follow-up study of 307 consecutive deaths among asbestos or insulation workers throughout the whole Northeast. Again, to his surprise, he turned up 10 deaths due to mesothelioma.

About the same time, the Pennsylvania State Department of Health began a blind study to find how mesothelioma might be affecting the more than 3000 asbestos workers scattered about the state.

The Department sent questionnaires to 183 hospitals in the southeastern part of the state asking the hospitals to report all mesothelioma diagnoses between 1954 and 1963.

Back came 42 documented cases of the disease, only 11 of which could not be traced to asbestos exposure.

Some of the disease is to be seen in asbestos plants and people who lived close plants most of their lives. There were members of families who had one or more asbestos worker members—a 3-year-old girl whose father was an asbestos engineer, a nurse whose father had worked for 25 years in an asbestos plant and a woman

in the lungs, where they form gummy deposits. This explains how asbestosis gets started, and perhaps even lung cancer. One theory is that the gummy substance that builds up around the asbestos fiber lodged in the lung can cause cancer elsewhere in the body. But how does it do it? Nobody knows.

Because it is such a new and little understood disease, mesothelioma is also creating some serious social and economic problems.

No state laws the disease in its workers' compensation laws, so nobody afflicted with it can be paid damages for his affliction. Even now, the first test cases are in the courts, where they may conceivably stay for the next 5 to 10 years.

The fact that nobody knows how much exposure to asbestos can bring on the disease has created controversy, too.

Most laws stipulate that asbestos workers be in an environment where there is more than five million particles of asbestos dust per cubic foot of air—a regulation that many in the asbestos industry fought years to get approved.

But with mesothelioma, the disease might be brought on by exposure to as little as one tenth or one hundredth that limit.

Despite obstacles like these, research has begun in a hand-



A worker operates a braider in a Canadian asbestos insulation plant.

ful of places to find out more about the ailment. Mount Sinai's Dr. Selikoff is now personally monitoring the 300 members of the Asbestos Workers Union in metropolitan New York. The Philadelphia local of the same union has started a similar program with Hahnemann Hospital to uncover more information.

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Fatal Cancer Is Showing Up Among Asbestos Workers



A worker operates a braider in a Canadian asbestos insulation plant.

alive or pin it down at autopsy.

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The first American study was one run in 1964 by Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of New York's Mount Sinai Hospital. Tracing the lives of 332 New York area members of the Asbestos Workers Union who were on the union rolls before Jan. 1, 1943, Dr. Selikoff found that 255 of them had died by Jan. 1, 1963.

Some of what he found did not surprise him. For example, 12 of the 255 died of asbestos, a long-known but deceptively fatal (due to antibodies) disease brought on by years of breathing in asbestos dust.

But Dr. Selikoff also found that 45 of the men had died of lung cancer, a rate 66 times higher than that in the normal adult male population. Even more surprising, he found five deaths due to mesothelioma.

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The Department sent questionnaires to 162 hospitals in the southeastern part of the state, asking the hospitals to report all mesotheliomas diagnosed between 1955 and 1963.

Back came 42 documented cases of the disease, only 11 of which could not be traced to asbestos exposure.

Ten victims of the disease turned out to be men who worked in asbestos plants, near asbestos plants most of their lives. Three were members of families who had one or more asbestos worker members—a 3-year-old girl whose father was an asbestos engineer, a nurse whose father gets there.

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Middlesex General's Dr. Borow says that he is in the process of setting up a traveling exhibit to bring attention

happens now being recognized as a future

Home for the Holidays?

PROMPT ALTERATIONS on clothing

before you return to school.