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USE OF ASBESTOS-BASED PRODUCTS
ON BOARD SHIPS

Information given on 31.10.67
to the General Inspectorate of the Danish Merchant Navy

by Dr. KARVOMEN

Head of the "Industrial Hygiene" Section
at the Head Offices of the European Section
of the World Health Organisation, Copenhagen.

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Dr. KARVOMEN gave the following information regarding the possible connection between asbestos dust and cancer of the lung. The General Inspectorate of the Danish Merchant Navy noted the following points:-

- (1) A connection between asbestos dust and cancer of the lung does, unfortunately, exist.
- (2) The World Health Organisation is at present carrying out detailed research work on this subject. Considerable progress was made in 1966 and 1967, and discoveries up to date would indicate that pollution of the air by asbestos dust must now be regarded as one of the most serious problems which exist at present.
- (3) If shipyard workers have to do intensive work on sheets of asbestos (Bulkheads, ceilings, inner platings, etc), they subject themselves and other employees in the shipyard, and also the inhabitants of the town in question, to an increased risk of cancer at the end of approximately 20 years.
- (4) In the United States, the American Medical Association provided the American Navy with a certain amount of information regarding asbestos dust and its effects on the lungs.

It would appear that this information was given between the years 1958 and 1962. The exact information which was given is not known, but it is interesting to note that the American Navy's immediate reaction was to remove, at considerable expense, all the sprayed asbestos insulations which had almost been completed on a large aircraft carrier.