

today's standards. In any case, as technology was developed for the control of asbestos dust levels, both in plant and out, these potentially hazardous conditions were eliminated.

A relatively small number of cases have also been reported among employees in shipyards and on construction projects who, while not working directly with asbestos, were exposed to heavy concentrations of airborne fiber by working in close proximity to those who did. Exposures of this type have been reduced by strictly enforced industrial safety devices and procedures.

The search for answers to the mesothelioma problem is complicated by a number of factors. In the first place, the number of cases being found, even today, is still relatively small. In all of Canada, for example, only 165 cases were reported in the ten year period ending in 1968. Secondly, it appears highly likely that certain varieties of asbestos (crocidolite and amosite) are more likely to cause mesothelioma than others. Thirdly, its diagnosis and recognition are still considered problems among medical experts. It is also certain that there are other causes of mesothelioma besides asbestos. Unfortunately, what those other causes might be is unknown. Until these and other equally important factors are thoroughly investigated, the mesothelioma question will remain unresolved.

Other Tumors

Some researchers have reported higher-than-normal rates of gastrointestinal cancer among some heavily exposed industry groups. Other researchers have reported no increase of this type of cancer. The consensus of medical opinion is that the evidence is too scanty for a definitive conclusion.

Asbestos and the General Public

Medical reports of excess asbestos-related disease among occupationally exposed populations have been frequently cited by some writers, environmentalists, politicians and others as "proof" that the health of the general public is endangered by the minute amounts of asbestos dust being found in community