

as far is known - in agreement with the results of other investigators. Finally it should be noted that there is an increasing tendency to report results of electron microscopic asbestos fibre determinations as gravimetric concentrations. The reason for this is that during preparation of the specimen the original fibres are broken down into fibrils, which means that there probably is no correlation between number of asbestos fibres counted with the electron microscope and the number of fibres originally present in the environment.

2. Food (see also 4, Beverages)

No pertinent data on the asbestos content of food is available. Qualitatively it can be said that its content depends on two kinds of asbestos sources:

- a. the natural background which depends on the natural asbestos content of soil and water. By passing through asbestos containing geological formation, the latter can pick up considerable numbers of asbestos fibres (vide paragraph 4);
- b. asbestos which is introduced by man's action.

In this connection filtration using asbestos filters and the use of talcum, which can contain asbestos, in food, medical preparations, etc. should be mentioned.

3. Soil

Asbestos is the generic term for a number of hydrated silicates which can be separated into flexible fibres (see Chapter I). Though commercial deposits are found mainly outside Western Europe, the minerals are widely distributed and in some regions the soil can contain large amounts of asbestos. This is well known in regions of Finland and Bulgaria but holds too for regions in Italy and France. It is clear that at these places the asbestos exposure level can be considerable but no quantitative data are available.

4. Water and beverages

A restricted number of data are available for asbestos particles in ground, surface and drinking water in mains and at the tap of the consumer. Most of the data relates to serpentine rock containing areas in Canada and in the U.S.A. The first published data originated from Cunningham and Pontefract

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