

only three and a half times that of the general male population. Cigarette smoking, therefore, could not explain the fact that in this group of asbestos-insulation workers the rate of death from lung cancer was seven times the expected rate.

Because of its objectivity, its scope, and its thoroughness, this study conducted by Drs. Selikoff, Churg, and Hammond had a great impact on the medical community when it was published, in the spring of 1964, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, and when it was delivered before the Conference on the Biological Effects of Asbestos that October. It was the first study ever made that had taken a large enough group of asbestos workers from a point far enough back in time and followed them long enough to determine unequivocally what their health experience had been. Unlike almost all the previous investigations, which simply indicated that there was an association between asbestos and various kinds of cancer, it was based upon the incidence of disease within a defined population, and thus answered a fundamental epidemiological question of how many cancers had developed out of how many persons exposed. In doing so, it furnished the first incontrovertible evidence that industrial exposure to asbestos was hazardous; it established sound methodology for future studies; and it marked a turning point in the views held by doctors and health officials around the world.

In the autumn of 1962, Dr. Selikoff—using donations from private sources and a grant awarded by the Health Research Council of New York City, headed by Dr. George S. Mirick—had set up informal clinics in union halls in New York and Newark and started giving X-ray examinations, pulmonary-function tests, and blood tests to the members of the two asbestos workers' locals. During the next year, he examined seven hundred and seventeen workers, and he also questioned them closely about their smoking habits, the kinds of materials they used, and the conditions under which they worked. "The insulation workers, an intelligent and highly skilled group of craftsmen, particularly educated me concerning their work," he once said. "I learned that they had comparatively light and intermittent exposure as asbestos workers because they often worked out on construction projects, and most of the materials they used had an asbestos content of less than five

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