

THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1974

Cancer Found in Relatives of Asbestos Workers 30 Years After Contact

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recognized as early as the first century, but it was not until British studies in the 1920's that any attempt was made to protect workers from its effects.

In the years since, workers exposed to asbestos have been known to face a greatly increased risk of developing lung cancer, mesothelioma, cancers of the gastrointestinal tract.

Asbestosis, a scarring of the lungs. These effects generally do not show up until 10 or 20 years — and sometimes 30 or 40 years — after the exposure to asbestos.

A Two-Decade Study
For two decades, Dr. Irving Selikoff, director of Mount Sinai's Laboratory of Environmental Sciences, has been studying the effects of asbestos on the men who worked at a Union Asbestos and Rubber Company (UNARCO, as it is commonly called) in Paterson. The factory was in operation from 1911 to 1954.

These men came home each day covered with the whitish fibers of asbestos — on their clothes, in their hair, in their teeth and pores. Sometimes they brought home samples of the mineral product they made for their children to play with.

According to Dr. William N. Shaw of the Mount Sinai, asbestos fibers can still be found in the attic dust of the homes of workers who left the plant as early as 30 years ago. A year ago, the Mount Sinai began a study of the fate of those who lived with the Paterson workers. Three for

under the direction of Dr. Henry A. Anderson, nearly 40 percent were found on X-rays to have the kinds of abnormalities in their lungs common to asbestos workers. In some cases where X-ray abnormalities were found in the family, the worker had been at the UNARCO plant for only a few days. In the last three months, three persons who were children at the time their relatives worked in the Paterson plant were found to have mesothelioma.

One of the three died of the disease in June at the age of 44. Her father had worked the day earlier at the UNARCO plant for a year in the mid-1940's, and

she took him a hot meal every evening, waiting outside the plant for her father to pick it up. Another patient was directly exposed to asbestos for just six months when she was four years old, and in the third case, the patient's father had worked at the plant for a year. This patient's sister, a non-smoker, died of lung cancer at the age of 39.

A fourth person, the daughter of the man who developed the asbestos material made by UNARCO, died in 1945 of mesothelioma, the same disease that took her father's life 14 years earlier.

The new spate of mesothelioma cases is among several re-

cent developments regarding asbestos that have caused alarm among the Mount Sinai investigators and stimulated labor leaders and others to challenge the adequacy of current protections against the time bomb effects of this persistent mineral.

Dr. Selikoff fears an eventual "epidemic" of mesothelioma since, he says, "what we are seeing today reflects the size of the work force in the 1930's and 1940's when asbestos production was one-tenth what it is today." More than one million persons have at one time worked directly with asbestos.

Dr. Selikoff is also worried about the nearly three million

Americans who worked in asbestos-ridden shipyards during World War II. Cases of mesothelioma have recently begun to appear among these people.

The other developments that are causing concern include a British medical report indicating that the levels of asbestos from Lake Superior that is contaminated with asbestos from the wastes of a mining company in fact cause lung disease and cancer years later. The British are now considering more stringent regulations.

Another British study showed that rats can develop mesothelioma after as little as one day of inhaling asbestos fibers.

And a preliminary, unpublished Canadian study also in-

cludes that the consumption of small amounts of asbestos fibers can result in a wide spectrum of cancerous tumors, a finding that could be of significance to the residents of Minnesota who for the last 18 years have been drinking water from Lake Superior that is contaminated with asbestos from the wastes of a mining company.

A United States Court of Appeals has allowed the Lake Superior dumping to continue because the Government could not demonstrate that Minnesotans had suffered ill effects from drinking the asbestos-containing water or breathing the fiber-laden air.

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AMERICAN FLINT GLASS WORKERS' UNION OF NORTH AMERICA

September 25, 1974

Mr. Ivan T. Uncapher
Secretary Treasurer
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Dear Sir and Brother:

I am ashamed of the hotel bill on the enclosed statement, so I charged eight hours lost time as straight time. It was a Sunday and premium time but I didn't work it and it helps to make up for that hotel bill. I learned not to stay in Manhattan.

The meeting was the best thing that could have happened for our plant. It scared the pants off of me, and I think my report woke up our members at last night's meeting.

Besides what is in my report, I talked to Mr. Samuel and since there will be \$10,000,000 available from the National Cancer Institute to the National Cancer Society for research, we will try to get some of the money used for a study of Pittsburgh Corning Port Allegany employees. There isn't any doubt that there will be more asbestos related diseases.

Mr. Samuel asked if I would meet with him and Mr. Molitor of the Pennsylvania Lung Association in Harrisburg, Pa. on October 2, 1974. I plan to meet with them at that time.

I had asked the company to furnish a list of all past and present employees with exposure to asbestos. I amended that request to include all dependants at the time of exposure.

This was a meeting of a committee. I will be grateful if the International will see fit to let me participate in any future work of this committee.

I just received a copy of the New York Times article. I will enclose it.

Fraternally,

Charlie
Charles L. Croop
Safety Committee

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