

STATISTICAL STUDIES OF MEDICAL RECORDS

There are two very important questions concerning the physiological nature of asbestos that have not yet been answered by any published investigation:

1. What is the expectation of asbestosis in workers exposed more than 15-20 years to low concentrations of asbestos dust? Among the 500-odd workers who composed the subjects in the U.S. Public Health Service study, there were abnormally few who had been exposed for more than 15 years and practically none over 20 years. These facts seriously affected the conclusions that could be drawn.

2. Is there a progression to advanced asbestosis after exposure of an individual has been discontinued or has been reduced to very low levels, due to action of dust deposits from earlier exposure? This question is of very great importance to intelligent medical supervision of workers in these plants.

It is virtually certain that statistical investigations of existing records would throw valuable light on these questions.

None of the plants visited during this inquiry have sufficiently extensive and systematic records to provide satisfactory answers to these questions, but the medical department of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, under Dr. A. J. Lanza, have X-rays of a number of men obtained in the early 1930's which could provide the nucleus of some useful information, depending on how many of the original group are available for re-X-ray.