air. "Neighborhood" and "household" cases of mesothelioma are cited extensively in this regard, as are the frequent reports of the findings of free asbestos fibers and so-called ferruginous bodies (which sometimes contain asbestos) in the lungs of city dwellers at autopsy.

The truth is, however, that there is no evidence — either from experience or from scientific research — that anyone in the general public has ever contracted any asbestos-related disease from exposure to these minute amounts of airborne asbestos, which are many times lower than levels which have been demonstrated to result in no excess of disease in occupationally exposed populations.

This conclusion is supported by both the Asbestos Panel of the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Biologic Effects of Atmospheric Pollutants, and the 33 member Advisory Committee on Asbestos Cancers of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a division of the World Health Organization.

In its 1971 booklet, entitled, "Asbestos: The Need For And Feasibility of Air Pollution Controls," the NAS Asbestos Panel, which consisted of seven of the nation's top experts on asbestos and health, stated that "there is no evidence that persons in the general population — without occupational, household or neighborhood exposures — have any increased risk of neoplasm, even though there may be ferruginous bodies or fibers in their lungs."

Warning against conclusions of the type frequently reached by the uninformed with regard to asbestos, the report further stated: "One cannot extrapolate from the mortality experience of, on the one hand, those who are directly and indirectly exposed to asbestos in their employment to, on the other hand, the general public, who have had moderate or slight exposures from ambient air."

The report concluded with the statement that "there is no evidence that the small numbers of fibers found in most members of the general population affect health or longevity."

The report of the IARC Advisory Committee represents the concensus of present world medical opinion on all aspects of the