"inert" when inhaled or injected into the lungs of animals. Silicon carbide is noted for its hardness, sharp edges, and points, which make it an ideal abrasive. When inhaled as a fine dust or injected intratracheally, it has caused a pulmonary response likewise classified as biologically "inert."[11,12]

Gaining increased attention is a newer concept that the potential of extraneous trace metals and other materials associated with fibrous minerals can cause the injury previously attributed to fibers. The respirable fibers may provide a transport mechanism for dosing tissues with injurious materials associated with the fibers. Cralley et al[13] have shown that asbestos textile workers in the past have been exposed to appreciable concentrations of nickel, chromium, and manganese associated with the fibrous mineral, and abraded from the alloy metal in asbestos processing equipment. They state further that there is evidence that this phenomenon exists in relation to a number of other fibrous minerals. There is also some indication that the biological response in the formation of ferruginous bodies may be related to the nature and extent of the layer of metal solute surrounding the fiber. Additional research needed in these areas is currently underway.

Unless the above facts are kept in mind, the finding that ferruginous bodies are formed in response to aluminum silicate, silicon carbide, and glass filaments in the lungs, may be used as still another reason for erroneously classifying these dusts with asbestos in their ability to produce lung damage.

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