

August 19, 1948

Mr. H. E. Jackson
Safety Engineer
Johns-Manville Corporation
22 East 40th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

Re: Dominic Bertogliat
P-48-415

Dear Mr. Jackson:

We have forwarded our report concerning the above case to Doctor Bardez, Pathologist, St. Mary's Hospital, 429 East Third Street, Duluth 5, Minnesota. As you will recall from previous correspondence, he made the material available to us for study and requested a copy of the report concerning our findings and interpretation.

Although individual susceptibility has been mentioned often to explain the variable incidence of pulmonary damage in a group of employees similarly exposed to harmful dusts, nevertheless we have never been able to demonstrate the existence of natural or hereditary factors which might account for such variability. Experimentally, different animals of the same species react essentially the same to similar exposures.

In contradistinction, however, there are acquired factors which play a significant role. The major one of these is of the respiratory system. Whether active or healed, it may alter the anatomy and physiology of that system thereby allowing greater ingress of the harmful agent into the lung permitting excessive pulmonary retention and stimulating inflammatory reaction. In addition, there are other seemingly important factors, including previous dust exposure, which may modify the reaction to other dust inhaled in subsequent unrelated exposures. Thus, the bituminous coal miner and the hematite miner react differently to silica than do those without previous exposure to dust. Age and general health might also be maintained as acquired predisposing factors.

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In general, it is most difficult to evaluate the role of individual susceptibility as a determinant of the pulmonary condition resulting from exposure to a dust. It is clearly established that the mineralogic composition, the particle size, the atmospheric concentration and the duration of exposure are of prime importance in the etiology of any pulmonary damage resulting from the inhalation of dust.

In consequence of the above, I can see no other alternative than to anticipate others with similar exposures to be similarly affected, but I expect also that individual susceptibility will effect some selection.

Sincerely yours

Arthur J. Vorwald, M. D.
Director

AJV:bw