



TO: See Distribution List DATE: December 8, 1969
FROM: T. F. Egan SUBJ: My Memo Dated
 December 2, 1969

Gentlemen:

The enclosed information should have been attached to my memo of December 2. Please make the necessary adjustments.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

T. F. Egan

Encs.

TFE/cmt

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REPRINT OF WALL STREET JOURNAL

Article November 7, 1968

Medical Researchers Study Role of Asbestos
As Cause of Ailments

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Men Who Work With It Have
High Rate of Lung Ills; Dust
Adds to Urban Air Pollution

By: Ronald Kessler

Mathew Grossi walks up stairs backwards because he must stop and rest after each step. He can barely talk, and in recent years his weight has dropped to 120 pounds from a robust 190 pounds.

Mr. Grossi, 56 years old, has asbestosis, a lung ailment that seriously impairs his ability to breathe. Five years ago it was discovered that he also had lung cancer, but his doctors say that the tumor was removed successfully.

Doctors attribute Mr. Grossi's breathing difficulties and his development of lung cancer primarily to the large amount of asbestos dust he inhaled between 1941 and 1954, when he was a maintenance man at an asbestos factory near his home in Paterson, New Jersey. Even though he has had no contact with the material since he left that job the effects of breathing the asbestos dust are expected to stay with him for life.

Lung ailments directly associated with exposure to asbestos thus far have been limited to those who work with the hard and corrosion-resistant mineral, which is widely used in insulation

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and auto brake linings. Nevertheless, some scientists recently have singled out asbestos particles as a possibly dangerous ingredient in urban air pollution. Asbestos particles get into the air through the disintegration of asbestos products or when the material is sprayed on girders or beams of building during construction. According to one current theory, asbestos dust in human lungs acts as a sort of blotter, absorbing and holding whatever harmful substances exist in cigaret smoke or urban air.

Protective Measures

Asbestos firms and Government agencies say they recognize asbestos dust as a potential health hazard. For many years, most asbestos-processing plants have employed various dust-control measures and required their production workers to wear protective face masks, industry sources say.

Johns-Manville Corp., the largest company in the field, last month announced it was entering a joint asbestos safety effort with the U.S. Public Health Service, the AFL-CIO International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers and Mount Sinai School of Medicine of City University of New York. The main aim is to develop improved methods for reducing the exposure to asbestos dust of the estimated 200,000 workers in the industry.

But the scope of the research project could turn out to be broader. "If asbestos in the air is found to be generally harmful, we will want to protect the public from it, too," says R. J. Solon, Jr., a Johns-Manville vice president. The company adds that one new device being planned is a sprayer that won't

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unloose an asbestos-particle snowstorm when used out of doors on construction jobs.

Researchers agree that more study is needed into the health effects of asbestos dust. Right now, for instance, most scientists believe that present levels of asbestos dust in urban air aren't harmful, but they quickly add they aren't sure. Also, despite the blotter theory, scientists aren't sure how asbestos particles work to injure human lungs.

Research in Cape Town

However, the suspicion that asbestos dust can be dangerous to city dwellers was strengthened by recent research findings. Autopsies performed in several hospitals in New York, Montreal and Cape Town, South Africa, revealed asbestos particles in the lungs of between 25% and 50% of persons who died of many causes. Dr. J. G. Thomason, professor of pathology at Cape Town University, who conducted the South African studies, reported that the amount of the dust found in the lungs of asbestos workers wasn't much higher than that discovered in the lungs of the deceased urbanites who had never worked with the material. Thus, he concluded, small amounts of the particles might well be damaging.

It is well established that prolonged exposure to asbestos dust is harmful to asbestos workers. Asbestosis, the disease from which Mr. Grossi suffers, has been discovered only among asbestos workers or construction hands who frequently work with the material. Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York says that "nearly all" the men he has examined who have been production workers in asbestos plants for 25 years or more show "some degree" of asbestosis.

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In addition, both asbestos production men and insulation handlers show a very high rate of mesothelioma, a rare type of cancer associated with asbestos dust. An estimated one in 10 asbestos workers dies of mesothelioma, compared with one in 10,000 of general population, studies show.

The most chilling statistic is that asbestos workers who are cigaret smokers have been found to die of all types of lung cancer at a rate 92 times that of nonsmokers in the general population. By comparison, smokers who aren't asbestos workers die of lung cancer at a rate 12 times that of nonsmokers. The extremely high rate of cancer deaths among asbestos workers who smoke has given rise to the theory that the dust acts to retain the cancer-causing ingredients believed by some scientists to be in cigaret smoke.

Researchers in the field hold out hope that the problem can be tackled successfully. They see no insurmountable obstacles to devising mechanical devices that can eliminate or sharply reduce the amount of dust generated by equipment that processes and applies asbestos. This would reduce future incidence of ailments linked to asbestos dust.

"I think we can lick this one," says E. Cuyler Hammond, a vice president of the American Cancer Society.

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