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NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
ASBESTOS CONFERENCE
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Assessment

The Generic Policy on the Regulation of Carcinogens is involving the full time efforts of OSHA and the Office of Toxic Substances. No action is expected on asbestos until resolution of the procedure in 1979. Pressure is now building by researchers, the U.A.W., and the Government to lower the 2 fiber/cc standard. High probability exists of a 1 fiber/cc standard. However, the new British approach consists of asbestos concentrations being reduced to the lowest attainable level under the 2 fiber/cc max ceiling. Further regulation will encourage the use of substitutes. The possibility remains for a more stringent standard of .5 fiber/cc or lower. This would virtually eliminate asbestos usage. In the interim, the issue is attaining continued worldwide involvement and concern as evidenced from the publicity it received from the Meet the Press telecast Sunday June 25, 1978 and the large international representation at the conference.

Highlights of Presentations

Canadian (McGill Study)

- Withdrawal from exposure does not halt the progress of the carcinogenic condition.
- The longer and/or greater the exposure, the greater the number of deaths.
- Smoking influences the incidence of larynx cancer under conditions of asbestos exposure.
- Carcinogenic conditions are most prevalent 20-30 years from first exposure.
- Each year cancer deaths are on the uprise from equal sample sizes of exposed populations.

German

- One fiber will not produce tumors.
- Asbestos fiber could act as an absorber of carcinogens. Knowledge is lacking on the initiation of cancer.
- The current U.S. standard allows for adequate control.
- Conditions have changed from the past and the issue should be updated in that perspective.

Asbestos was discussed by Mt. Sinai, J-M, and the U.A.W. Industry was not convincing enough to sway the debate from a pro-regulation stance.

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