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Study Links Lung Disease to Asbestos

BOSTON (AP)—A high incidence of chronic lung inflammation has been reported in a study of asbestos workers in a private New England shipyard.

The report in the current issue of New England Journal of Medicine said 101 pipe coverers in new ship construction were studied.

It said the survey indicated that "prolonged exposure to low concentrations of asbestos is hazardous" and supported the lowering of the threshold-limit values

More Common

It said that asbestosis, the lung disease caused by inhaling particles of the mineral fibers, was 11 times more common among pipe coverers than among a control group.

The earliest case was found 13 years after employment, and the prevalence was 38% after 20 years, the report said.

It said that the test exposure had been near the then recommended threshold limit of 5 million particles per cubic foot.

Harvard Study

The study was conducted by physicians and environmental health specialists from the Harvard school of public health and the Boston University school of medicine.

The report said the study concentrated on shipyard pipe coverers because they generally are exposed to low concentrations of asbestos.

The principal author of the report was Dr Raymond L. H. Murphy of Harvard.

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