

Among those members of Local 259 of the UAW who were examined, 27 had been examined previously (Lorimer, 1976). Table 19 shows the comparison of the two sets of readings for these individuals. Of the 27 pairs of X-rays read, ten received identical readings. The 1979/1980 reading was one subcategory higher than that of 1974 in seven; in six it was one subcategory less. One reading was two subcategories higher in 1979-80 and three were two subcategories lower. Thus the overall readings were very similar between the two periods of time and there was no evidence for any progression of fibrosis among the small group of individuals examined in two periods of time.

Auto body repair and undercoating work

The highest percentage of X-ray abnormalities in any group observed in this study was among men employed in auto body shops for varying periods of time (38.6% versus 24.5% for brake workers and 18.6% for garage workers who did no brake work). While relatively few men were in the category, the percentage of abnormalities was significantly higher than garage workers who did no brake repair ($P < 0.05$, one-sided). The average time of employment of the group in body shops was 13.3 years. Of those employed more than 20 years, 5 of 7 (71%) had abnormal X-rays.

In past years asbestos was commonly used as a reinforcing agent in plastic auto body fillers used for dent patching. Extensive dust exposure was common as the material was sanded smooth. The extent of asbestos exposure is unknown because no fiber counts are available from such operations. Fortunately, with the increased awareness of asbestos hazards and with the introduction of the occupational asbestos standard, most manufacturers removed asbestos from their formulations. In a current (1981) analysis of six compounds used in shops employing UAW 259 members, no asbestos was identified. However, while current asbestos risks no longer exist in these shops (at least to our knowledge), persons exposed previously should be made aware of their asbestos exposure, the risk associated with it, the synergistic effect of cigarette smoking, and the desirability of appropriate medical surveillance.