Asbestos [illegible] Have Role in [illegible] Cancer

By MIRIAM KASS
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AUSTIN — The asbestos that lines automobile brakes may play a role in causing lung cancer, an environmental health specialist said Thursday at the annual Texas Medical Association meeting.

Dr Arthur J. Vorwald says there isn't any real proof yet —not even the kind of statistical evidence that pointed to cigarette smoking. But he does describe circumstantial evidence.

FIRST, HE says that studies have shown asbestos fibers, "like pieces of fiber from my coat," to be present in from 70 to 80 per cent of lungs examined at autopsy. "These were not people who had lung cancer." They represented a varied hospital population.

Second, he says asbestos has been incriminated as an occupational hazard with respect to lung cancer.

"In an occupational situation, where men are really exposed by mining and milling, the incidence of carcinoma of the lung is alarming," says Dr Vorwald, who heads the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit.

The U. S. Public Health Service is currently investigating the asbestos-lung cancer relationship in asbestos workers.

DR VORWALD says asbestos also appears to be associated with a new type of tumor which grows in the covering around the lungs.

"It has only come into being in the last few years. It was found in children in South Africa, where they pave the streets with asbestos discards. And it is being found in England."

[illegible] English cases he [illegible] one was in an [illegible] "His job was to cut [illegible] covered cable," he [illegible]

[illegible] Vorwald pointed out that [illegible] is used for siding and [illegible] material in building [illegible] as for brake linings.

THE ORDINARY stopping [illegible] of a car apparently causes fibers to "spew" out [illegible] the air, he says, and [illegible] even be possible for [illegible] asbestos to be carried through the vents that [illegible] in buildings.

Still, he could not assert [illegible] sources are necessarily a hazard. "The real problem," he said, "is how much of a substance does it take?"

And then, when that question is answered, the next one will be, what happens to the [illegible] causing effect when you combine that substance with some other chemical?

[illegible] is only one of a host of [illegible] pollutants about which [illegible] questions have to be answered, says Dr Vorwald.

He does not negate "self-pollution," as he calls smoking. But he does think people [illegible] to realize that the air [illegible] industrialized cities is "dirty," and that the dirt is man made.