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October 10, 1972

TO: MEMBERS OF THE ASBESTOS STUDY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: ASBESTOS PUBLICITY - DR. SELIKOFF

Attached is an article from the New York Times of October 5, 1972.

Of particular interest is that paragraph concerned with "wearing away of asbestos brake linings in automobiles and trucks." The reporter says this is a "significant source of airborne asbestos." This paragraph is not directly related to the headline and lead article concerning the incidence of cancer of the stomach, colon and rectum (as well as lung cancer) in workers exposed to asbestos.

Ordinarily, there will be an article of this type in the Times about every month with Dr. Selikoff generally the source.

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Link to Cancer Found Asbestos

A team of cancer researchers reported yesterday that asbestos, already implicated as a cause of lung cancer in workers repeatedly exposed to the material, might also have caused a five-fold increase in the incidence of cancer of the stomach, colon and rectum in the same workers.

The finding, which the scientists said confirmed a long-held suspicion, raises the possibility that the low levels of airborne asbestos particles known to exist in urban air may increase the risk of cancer among the public at large.

The researchers also said that their findings might lead to a better understanding of gastrointestinal cancer, the causes of which are not known.

The report was given in Paris, France, before the International Agency for Research on Cancer, an arm of the World Health Organization, by Irving J. Selikoff of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond and Herbert Selman of the American Cancer Society's Environmental Cancer Research Project.

The findings are based on a study of 632 members of the New York and New Jersey asbestos workers' union who wore various forms of asbestos in widely used fireproofing material.

From 1943, when the study began, until the end of the study, the researchers monitored the health and causes of death of the workers. Several years ago, Dr. Selikoff and Dr. Hammond calculated that the workers had been exposed to asbestos fibers.

At that time there was a suggestion that other types of cancer might also be more common, but not until now, the scientists said, was there sufficient statistical evidence to confirm the suspicion.

However, now, that more time has elapsed since the first exposure to asbestos, researchers found that 41 workers had stomach cancer of the colon and rectum, about three times the number that would have been expected under normal circumstances.

Among the 41 workers, 10 men in a similar age group, unusually expected to live only 12.5 should have died, the same causes.

Earlier studies have shown that in the process of applying asbestos insulation during construction of buildings and ships, countless tiny particles of the material become lodged and float into the air.

In urban areas it has been shown that another source of airborne asbestos is the wearing away of asbestos brake linings in automobiles and trucks. The set of asbestos brake linings in each car wears off a fine dust, which is then kicked into the air by the drafts of moving vehicles.

Examination of the lungs of workers and animals exposed to such air has shown that particles often lodge in the lungs and, apparently, are embedded for long periods of time.

Last week Dr. Selikoff reported on a study of asbestos exposure among World War II shipbuilders. He warned that such persons should be aware of their increased risk of cancer and should get more frequent check-ups so that the disease can be diagnosed when it is still treatable.

NOTE

N.Y. TIMES OCTOBER 5, 1972