

Extracts from
THE AMERICAN WAY OF CANCER
A Special CBS Report
(60 min)
Dan Rather, Commentator

Asbestos Information Association
North America
1650 L Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

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10PM EST

Introduction: For the past 25 years the Cancer mortality rate has increased over 20%. Cancer doesn't only attack the old, its the number one disease killer of children under 15 and of women between the ages of 25 and 64. It is estimated that 85% of all cancer is caused by smoking, by chemicals in the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink and substances we are exposed to at work. We have spent millions of dollars in this country looking for cancer cures. The evidence now indicates that the way to lick cancer may be to prevent it. This is what tonite's CBS Reports attempts to discuss. The American Way of Cancer.

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Dan Rather: ... The maps have been compiled by the National Cancer's Institutes' county by county study. They may be an important clue as to what specific things cause what specific things cause what specific cancers. New Jersey leads the country on a per-capita basis on some types of cancer. Breast

Asbestos Control Program records that link.

Dr. Harry
Anderson:
Mt. Sinai
School of
Medicine

... We're finding one in five are dying from lung cancer, 1 in 15 from mesothelioma, about 1 in 10 from gastrointestinal cancer.

Rather:

Mesothelioma, a cancer so rare that most surgeons never see it. But those who take care of asbestos workers know it well.

Maxwell Borow:
M.D., Somerset
Hospital, New
Jersey

This is a lung. The upper lobe and lower lobe of lung and this white tissue is a malignancy which is arising from the chest wall and compressing and covering the lung just like a glove on a finger. And here you see the tissue growing between the lobes.

Rather:

This is the actual cancer?

Dr. Borow:

This is the actual cancer. It remains in the cavity where it starts and gets larger and larger in bulk and mass and eventually compresses the lung and diminishes the patient's ability to breathe.

Rather:

That's the case in the lung, How about the intestine?

Dr. Borow:

This is a cross section of the abdomen. Here are intestines and this whole white mass is the mesothelioma which has completely filled the free space in the abdominal cavity and is compressing

Dr. Borow : the intestines.
(continued)

Rather: What are the chances of you being able to save him?

Dr. Borow: Our mortality has been 100%. We have no therapy which is effective in the treatment of this disease.

Rather: Asbestos inhaled in this plant 20-30 years ago caused the deaths of a third of those who worked here. Asbestos has caused the death of tens of thousands of workers all around the country. For years, asbestos was considered an occupational hazard, but in Patterson there is almost certain evidence that asbestos has reached beyond the plant. Isabel Vanzil (sp?) died at 37 of cancer caused by asbestos, the records show. Her only known exposure came when as a child she washed her father's work clothes.

Manville, New Jersey -- Johns-Manville has been making asbestos here for 63 years. In the old days this plant, like most asbestos plants, was dusty. The air heavy. Workers often couldn't see each other across the aisles. When they complained they were told it was a nuisance dust. Almost 100 workers in this plant died of mesothelioma. Two died the week we were here. Today, this plant

Rather: meets government standards and workers and management are safety conscious. But that doesn't mean that this plant or any other asbestos plant in the country is safe. Current regulations allow a few asbestos fibers in the air. The government now says that these few may be too many. New evidence indicates low levels also may cause cancer. Just proposed, standards 10 times stricter than those in effect. There is even less protection for over a million workers exposed to asbestos in hundreds of other jobs. For even existing regulations are not enforced. That's the pattern. The enforcement of questionable regulations in one place, no enforcement in another. And asbestos is just one substance -- a mineral. Most cancer causing agents are chemicals. The chemical industry is everywhere in New Jersey

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Russell
Train:
Administrator,
Environmental
Protection
Agency

It is not practical to believe that industry will police itself and that is not to be critical. Many elements of industry are very responsible but industry is a very big name and this would be like saying do you think it would be reasonable to expect society fully to police itself? The answer is no. We do need in this field a good effective balanced toxic substances control act that imposes reasonable burdens of responsibility on industry to test, and

Train (cont) to produce the data that can assure the public that the public interest is being safeguarded in this regard.

Rather: President Ford is taking the position that while he considers environmental problems serious, he is not going to allow environmental measures to endanger the economy. Is it possible to be protective and economically supportive at the same time?

Train: Absolutely. In fact, unless we protect the environment we are not going to have the economy at all. Jobs aren't going to do a lot of good for people if their children are getting sick. We do need jobs, we do need industrial activity and good healthy economy. At the same time we do need a good healthy society and we have to do both.

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Rather: When Charles Milton was first exposed to arsenic no one knew it caused cancer. When William Contrini and all the thousands of asbestos workers who died were first exposed, again no one understood that asbestos caused cancer. But we understand now. We now understand the potential danger to the little girl in Cincinnati to all of us of cancer causing substances even in small amounts in our food, air, and water. If as scientists say, 85%

Rather:

of all cancer can be traced to substances in the environment, then the majority of cancers can be prevented. So cancer turns out to be a social disease. In a large part a by-product of our way of life. But the same technological genius that inadvertently produced the American way of cancer is perfectly capable of reducing the epidemic. What can we do? We can identify cancer causing agents before they are added to food. We can pretest chemicals before exposing workers and dumping the leftovers in the air and water. We can prevent great number of cancers. If we do not, our children will certainly suffer even higher rates of cancer than we do.

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Dan Rather for CBS News

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