

SAINT LUKE'S HOSPITAL

OF THE METHODIST CHURCH
11311 SHAKER BOULEVARD
CLEVELAND 4, OHIO

September 4, 1963

G. P. Eddy, M.D.
Medical Director
The Carborundum Company
P.O.Box 403
Niagara Falls, New York

Dear Doctor Eddy:

Your reaction to the end of the third paragraph appearing on page 131 of the statement concerning The Pneumoconioses which appears in the Archives of Environmental Health in August, 1963, is understandable. During the many weeks that it took us to put this statement together it was indicated a number of times by some of us that we would have preferred having it published in sections under each individuals name who was responsible for each section. A compromise is the way in which it was published with an indication as to which parts were written by each individual. You will note that Dr. Mayer wrote the part concerning which you have some question. There was, of course, no reason to hope that each of us would agree to what the other said, either as to content or phrasing of statement. As a matter of fact, I believe that the first sentence of the same paragraph that disturbs you, namely the one beginning "Early medical studies" will lead to much more difficulty in the courts than the area you raised the question about because of the use of the word "excessive concentration". It is impossible to define what is meant by "excessive concentration" and those who wish to will cite Dr. Mayer as indicating that the particular concentration to which their particular man was exposed is excessive and hence, use him as the authority to say that all dusts or any dust is capable of causing a disturbance of pulmonary function.

It is my own impression that Dr. Mayer was making a very general statement and in addition, was approaching it somewhat from the historical point of view and hence made his comments concerning abrasives. I am sure that Dr. Mayer is as aware as any of the rest of us that modern abrasives, for the most part, are entirely free of the harmful free crystalline silica. As a matter of fact, in the same sentence that concerns you I think it is generally known that there are many coal mines where quartz is not present

G.P. Eddy, M.D.

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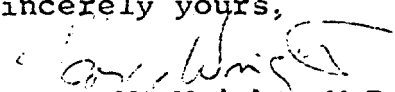
in hazardous amounts and the same can be said of some metal mines. Many of the clays used in potteries, infact most of them, are so low in free crystalline silica as to be free of hazard. Stone quarries, of course, can be thought of including marble and this, of course, has no free crystalline silica in it at all.

I rather expect that somewhere in the writing of each one of us there can be found statements that may conflict with fact under special circumstances. Readers who are seeking for this sort of isolated statement to make use of in medical legal proceedings don't have to come to this particular statement just published in order to find plenty of material to use in supporting their claims.

In your letter to me you asked me whether or not I agree with you that there should be a correction made in the succeeding issues of Archives of Environment Health. Although I agree entirely with you that modern abrasives are low or entirely lacking in free crystalline silica, I doubt the necessity or even the wisdom of publishing a correction of this particular point. The good work done by the abrasive people in this regard has already been publicized so widely that surely all experts in the field know the facts and indeed most of the physicians and lawyers who have only a casual acquaintance with the problem know it. I wonder if a letter from you to Dr. Mayer and a return from Dr. Mayer indicating his agreement as regards to free crystalline silica wouldn't be all that you need. Perhaps Dr. Mayer might even agree in writing to let this be used as part of the record in any of those cases that are subsequently brought to a hearing on the basis of this particular statement. My reluctance to see a formal correction made stems from the fact that I am sure your disagreement is only one of many that we will hear from or will surely hear from if a correction is published on this particular matter. I can foresee that the journal may have to submit a good portion of a subsequent issue to the airing of disagreements. If such disagreements are of sufficient magnitude than I am sure the journal would agree to publish them, but the crux of the problem exists in understanding and definition of "sufficient magnitude". If there was a portion of the journal devoted to "letters to the editor" this, of course, would be the ideal place to publish a brief statement from you in regard to this matter.

It was nice to hear from you and I do hope to see you at the fall meeting of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation.

Sincerely yours,


George W. Wright, M.D.
Head, Medical Research

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