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"ASBESTOS EXPOSURE & NEOPLASIA"
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DR. IRVING SELIKOFF, ET AL

February 21, 1967

F. H. Edwards - Toledo
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This is in further reference to the subject paper, in which a statistical study was made of the health history of 632 insulation workers who had been exposed to "asbestos dust" for a period of 20 years and longer.

During the period of 1943 to 1962, Selikoff reports that 45 of the 632 workers died of cancer of the lung, pleura, and trachea, whereas, only 6.6 such deaths would be expected from general U.S. experience. He goes on to state, "Thus it was found that the death rate from cancer of the bronchus and pleura was 6.8 times as high as in the general U.S. white male population..." (underlining mine).

It is this comparison that I feel is not scientifically sound. Rather than making a comparison with the general U.S. experience, a comparison should have been made with white males who had lived in the same metropolitan New York City area for comparable periods.

This is not to infer that no difference in death rate from cancer would have been found between the asbestos workers and the white males in New York City, but it is well known that the incidence of lung cancer is much greater in our larger cities than in small towns and rural areas.

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