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ASBESTOS TEXTILE INSTITUTE

Air Hygiene Committee Meeting
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Prospectus for the Study of Asbestosis

Dr. P. A. Theodos

The clinical, roentgenographic and pathological features of asbestos are fairly well known, numerous studies dealing with these aspects having been reported over the years. However, the exact nature of the respiratory impairment produced and the relationship of the heart and pulmonary circulation to the lung changes has not been the subject of extensive investigation, primarily because of the lack of adequate means for study. The development of pulmonary function studies, newer electrocardiographic techniques and cardiac catheterization make a direct approach to these problems now possible.

To properly investigate the problem of asbestosis a sufficient number of patients with adequate industrial exposure must be studied. It is felt that a group of 50 patients studied over a period of a year would yield sufficient data of statistical significance. It is proposed to do the following studies on this group:

1. A complete medical and industrial history, physical examination, and certain routine laboratory studies including x-rays of the chest and electrocardiograms.

2. Complete pulmonary function studies including measurements of the ventilation, degree of emphysema and the respiratory gas exchange.

3. Cardiac catheterization to determine the pressures in the pulmonary circulation and to correlate these with the clinical features and the pulmonary function studies.

4. Lung biopsy under local anesthesia in selected cases to correlate the pathological features with the clinical and laboratory findings.

The basic studies would require hospitalization for about one week. If a lung biopsy is done, an additional 3 days should be allowed for. Upon discharge from the hospital a complete report of all the medical data will be sent to the plant physician and to the family physician (if desired).

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