As part of the 50th birthday celebration, we are arranging to reprint 12 papers, the Editor’s Choice, which have appeared in previous issues of the Journal. They have been chosen partly to illustrate the range and scope of the Journal over the years and partly because they are or were important in their day. More significantly, they have been chosen because they exemplify some of the best in scientific writing and can all be read with great pleasure and all who wish to communicate their observations, their ideas, or their enthusiasms would do well to study them and learn from them.

We will publish one paper each month through the year and they will appear in the order in which they were originally published.

Editor’s Choice

Mortality from lung cancer in asbestos workers

by Richard Doll

(British Journal of Industrial Medicine 1955;12:81–6)

It will come as a surprise to many of those reading the Journal today to realise that the link between exposure to asbestos and lung cancer had not been settled by the mid-1950s. In the introduction to this paper, Doll notes that only 61 cases of lung cancer had been reported since 1935 in persons with asbestosis and there were still those who were sceptical about the association.

Doll first collected necropsy data on persons who had been employed at “a large asbestos factory” and found that of the 105 cases examined, 18 had died of lung cancer, 15 in association with asbestosis. He then followed up a group of 113 men who had worked for at least 20 years in areas of the factor scheduled under the 1931 Asbestos Industry Regulations as being “dusty”. Among this small group there had been 11 deaths from lung cancer (all with a mention of asbestosis) compared with an expected number of 0·8. Doll was also able to show that the incidence of both asbestosis and lung cancer had declined after the better control of exposure consequent upon the introduction of the 1931 Regulations. He went on to state that the question of “whether the specific industrial risk of lung cancer had yet been completely eliminated cannot be determined with certainty.” It still cannot.

Doll is, of course, best known for the work on smoking and lung cancer carried out in association with Bradford Hill. This elegant paper is a good example of his many forays into occupational epidemiology to which he has made many important contributions.
Diagnosis is often delayed. When removed from exposure symptoms do not completely resolve and abnormalities of lung function remain. Earlier diagnosis significantly influences the prospect of recovery.

Workers often remain exposed, however, and the reason may often be financial. Continued exposure means that symptoms are less likely to improve and their lung function is likely to deteriorate. In our opinion compensation should be directed at facilitating relocation and retraining rather than providing inadequate compensation for disability, which is difficult to assess in an asthmatic group.

Requests for reprints to: Dr P S Burge, Occupational Lung Disease Unit, East Birmingham Hospital, Bordesley Green East, Birmingham B9 5ST.


Accepted 10 August 1992

Destruction of manuscripts

From 1 July 1985 articles submitted for publication will not be returned. Authors whose papers are rejected will be advised of the decision and the manuscripts will be kept under security for three months to deal with any inquiries and then destroyed.
chronic interstitial scarring that was unchanged from a 1987 film, but improved from a 1985 film. SM was taking steps to re-enter the workforce.

This patient was evaluated at the Greater Cincinnati Occupational Health Centre in Cincinnati, Ohio.


Vancouver style

All manuscripts submitted to the Br J Ind Med should conform to the uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals (known as the Vancouver style).

The Br J Ind Med, together with many other international biomedical journals, has agreed to accept articles prepared in accordance with the Vancouver style. The style (described in full in Br Med J, 24 February 1979, p 532) is intended to standardise requirements for authors.

References should be numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text by Arabic numerals above the line on each occasion the reference is cited (Manson1 confirmed other reports2-5...). In future references to papers submitted to the Br J Ind Med should include: the names of all authors if there are six or less or, if there are more, the first three followed by et al; the title of journal articles or book chapters; the titles of journals abbreviated according to the style of Index Medicus; and the first and final page numbers of the article or chapter.

Examples of common forms of references are:

We are grateful to Dr Mengxuan Hu for helpful discussions during the course of this work and to Dr Alain-Jacques Valleron for his critical reviews of the manuscript.

Requests for reprints to: Dr Ruoling Chen, Department of Biostatistics, Anhui Medical University, Hefei, Anhui 230032, The People's Republic of China.


Accepted 27 July 1992
Swedish women with an occupation in the 1960 Census were used. The expected numbers of deaths were standardised for age based on comparisons in five year birth cohorts and standardised mortality ratios (SMRs) were calculated for each occupation. As in our earlier study we calculated smoking adjusted SMRs, based on data from a survey in 1963 of smoking habits in different occupations. We assumed that smokers had a twofold increased risk for asthma compared with non-smokers. Confidence intervals (95% CIs) were calculated based on a Poisson distribution. The analyses were only carried out on occupations with more than 15 observed cases (n = 19). The table shows the results.

An increased mortality due to asthma was found in eight occupations. In three, textile fabric workers, dressmakers, and farm workers, occupational exposures such as cotton dust and microorganisms could be risk factors. Textile fabric workers are probably exposed to dust from crude cotton. Hence some misclassification between asthma and byssinosis may exist in that occupation.

With a reservation for waitresses, the increased risks in the other occupations, caretakers, maids, housekeepers, and other sheet metal workers, may be explained by selection factors—that is, subjects with asthma or respiratory symptoms seek physically light occupations.

NOTICES


Copies of the original WOiRD report and the 1992 WOiRD supplement may be obtained by calling 1-800-35NIOSH or by writing to: Epidemiological Investigations Branch, Division of Respiratory Disease Studies, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 944 Chestnut Ridge Road, Morgantown, West Virginia 26505, USA.

Nato advanced study institute on modulation of cellular responses in toxicity, Ponte di Legno, Brescia, Italy, 24 January—3 February 1994

Composed of an integrated series of invited lectures, the Institute will focus on current concepts and strategies in research on cellular responses in toxicity. Topics for discussion will include: modern methods in toxicology; milestones in cell toxicology; target organ toxicity; strategic applications. Panel discussions and round tables will be organised to encourage exchange of ideas among participants and faculty. Directors of the course are: professor Corrado Lodovico Galli of the University of Milan and professor Alan Marvin Goldberg of the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore.

Attendance is restricted to a maximum of 60 participants. A limited number of grants will be available to defray part of the expenses of pre and postdoctoral trainees. Persons wishing to attend the Institute should send a curriculum vitae and a list of publications to the organising secretariat. Deadline: 10 November 1993. The deadline for application for grants is 10 October 1993. For more information contact the organising secretariat: Mrs Daniela Galli, Nutrition Foundation of Italy, Via G. Balzaretti 9-20133 Milano, Italy. Telephone (+ 39/2) 29404672-20488320; fax (+ 39/2) 29404961.

International section of the ISSA for the Prevention of Occupational Risks in the Chemical Industry

15th International Symposium, safety pays! Safety in interaction with quality, productivity, and economy, 30 August—1 September 1993 in Lugano, Switzerland.

Simultaneous translation: German, English, French, and Italian. For further information contact: AISS-Chemistry Section c/o Berufsge nossenschaft der chemischen Industrie, Kurfürsten-Anlage 62, D-6900 Heidelberg, Germany. Fax 06221—523323.

16th International Symposium, machinery in the chemical, plastics and rubber industries—safe design and safe use, 6 to 8 June 1994 at the ACHEMA 94 in Frankfurt am Main