

MEDICINE

Industry's "Cancer Role"

A doctor tells science writers that industry should spend its advertising dollars to protect the populace against cancer, both on the producing and consuming end.

INDUSTRY'S ROLE in the development of various types of cancer, both among its employes and the general public, was criticized by Dr. Wilhelm C. Hueper of the National Cancer Institute of Bethesda, Md. Verbal volley number one was fired at the automobile industry.

"If the auto industry would spend the money that goes for television shows and flashy chrome on more research, maybe they could develop a device to eliminate the hydrocarbons that are formed from burning gasoline," Dr. Hueper told science writers attending a seminar in Louisville, Ky., sponsored by the American Cancer Society. The recently developed device that can be added to automobiles controls hydrocarbons formed by oil, not gasoline, he explained.

Volley number two was directed at the chemical industry. He said one company pressured him into suppressing results of his study of the incidence of bladder cancer among workers at that chemical company. Dr. Hueper's study showed that a significantly higher incidence of the cancer occurred among workers at the plant than among the general population.

He then moved on to the dye industry, which, he said, refused "point blank" to reveal the number of cases of bladder cancer among that industry's workers. Incidentally, he said, two dyes that are proved cancer producers in man are lipstick colors. They are yellow AB and yellow OB.

Experiments with these dyes revealed that they produce toxicity in animals, not cancer, although they are carcinogenic in humans. Although only a small portion of lipstick is eaten by women, these color agents, when applied to the skin for long periods of time, can cause cancer.

The German-born researcher then named several companies in the tar, petroleum, asbestos and chromium industries as guilty parties in the move to suppress facts concerning the occupational hazards of these industries. He referred to, but did not name, a recognized medical man who represented the asbestos industry. Dr. Hueper said he pointed out to the industrial medical man the results of a study which revealed that workers in that industry had 15 times the chance of developing lung cancer than the general population. The prominent medical man chose not to reveal this information, "for patriotic reasons," as Dr. Hueper quoted him.

Tackling the drug industry, Dr. Hueper reminded reporters that arsenic is known to cause cancer in humans. It has not, on the other hand, ever been known to cause cancer in experimental animals. Yet, at

least one drug firm is manufacturing a preparation that contains this carcinogenic agent. The preparation is now being added to cattle and chicken feeds, pesticides, herbicides, and even some tonics for human consumption. All of these can, in one form or another, be eaten by humans, he pointed out.

Summing up, Dr. Hueper warned that: "We are superimposing on our natural disease producing environment a new set of disease factors that are industry-produced and man-made." Numerous vested interests, specifically, industry, are constantly attempting to conceal industry's role in the cause of cancer among employees of these industries and the general population, he charged.

Cure Prediction Hit

"PSYCHOLOGICALLY BAD" was the term used by a cancer researcher to describe predictions that the cure for cancer is just around the corner and that a breakthrough has been discovered.



POTENTIAL POWER—*This experimental thermionic tube has a glowing wire that emits electrons, making a current flow in ionized cesium gas. The cesium capsule at the bottom of the tube is pointed out by Dr. J. W. Coltman of Westinghouse Electric Corporation, where thermionic power generation is under development. Thermionic devices may be used for space power or to add extra power to nuclear generating stations.*

Scientists have made little, if any, progress in the treatment of the very advanced cancers that are beyond surgical intervention, Dr. E. V. Cowdry of the Wernse Cancer Research Laboratory at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, told science writers.

Favorable reports of achievements in cancer research can give a false impression, leaving people with the attitude that they need not watch for signs of cancer in themselves because the "cure" for cancer is bound to be found soon. Dr. Cowdry said he thought medical science will never be capable of preventing all cancers.

He believes the principal barrier to cancer control is lack of knowledge of cancer cells themselves. Another barrier is the attitude of people, which is very important. For one thing, people should be aware of cancer-causing substances and be willing to avoid them. This requires constant vigilance through many years, he said.

Obviously, cancer control is very different from the control of infectious diseases that can, in so many cases, be obtained from a single dose of a vaccine.

Dr. Cowdry said he believes a big step forward in the control of cancer will come when the lives of individual body cells are better understood. He urged that work be done on individual cancer cells. The concept that each cancer is a population of cells in various stages of birth, maturity, old age and death must be studied, he said.

Since virtually nothing is known about the "vital statistics" of cancer cells, Dr. Cowdry said, it is important to learn which cluster of cells in a cancer grows more diversified with the time in which the cancer has been established and during which period of life the cluster is progressing.

At present, medical scientists can recognize cancers earlier and treat them somewhat better than formerly, he reported. However, the fact remains that an estimated 265,000 Americans will die from cancer this year. Approximately 85,000 of these will die because they will not get treatment early enough. A total of 770,000 will be under medical care for cancer during 1960.

Science News Letter, April 9, 1960

ROCKETS AND MISSILES

U.S. Launches Tiros I, TV Scans Cloud Covers

A 270-POUND weather satellite, Tiros I, has been launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla. Shaped like a giant pillbox, Tiros I carries two TV cameras to take still photographs of the earth's cloud cover.

The launching is part of a long-range program designed to develop a satellite capability for providing world-wide meteorological information. This would greatly assist meteorologists in making forecasts.

Tiros I is expected to broadcast its pictures for about three months. One of its cameras will take pictures of areas 800 miles wide. The second will photograph smaller areas within the 800-mile areas pictured by the wide-angle camera.

Science News Letter, April 9, 1960