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Article

# Amphibole fibers in a taconite mine and in the lungs of the miners

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## Keywords:

taconite dust; airborne fibers; fibers in lung tissue; autopsy

## Abstract

Fibers of the amphibole mineral series have been demonstrated in the dust from an open taconite ore mine. Though the total dust levels in some places are high, exposures to fibers are below one fiber/cc. The energy dispersive X-ray spectra of the amphibole fibers correspond to those of cummingtonite-grunerite, hornblende, or actinolite. The same type and size distribution of fibers were found during post mortem analyses of lung tissue from two previously exposed miners. The pathological examination revealed an undifferentiated small cell carcinoma of left lung as well as pulmonary fibrosis in one of the cases. In the second case a poorly differentiated squamous cell carcinoma of left lung was found along with silicosis.

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