

Lingering cough

New study shows many Ground Zero workers face serious illness

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A new medical report released yesterday details serious health consequences for rescue workers and babies born to expectant mothers who were exposed to airborne smoke, dust and chemicals released at Ground Zero.

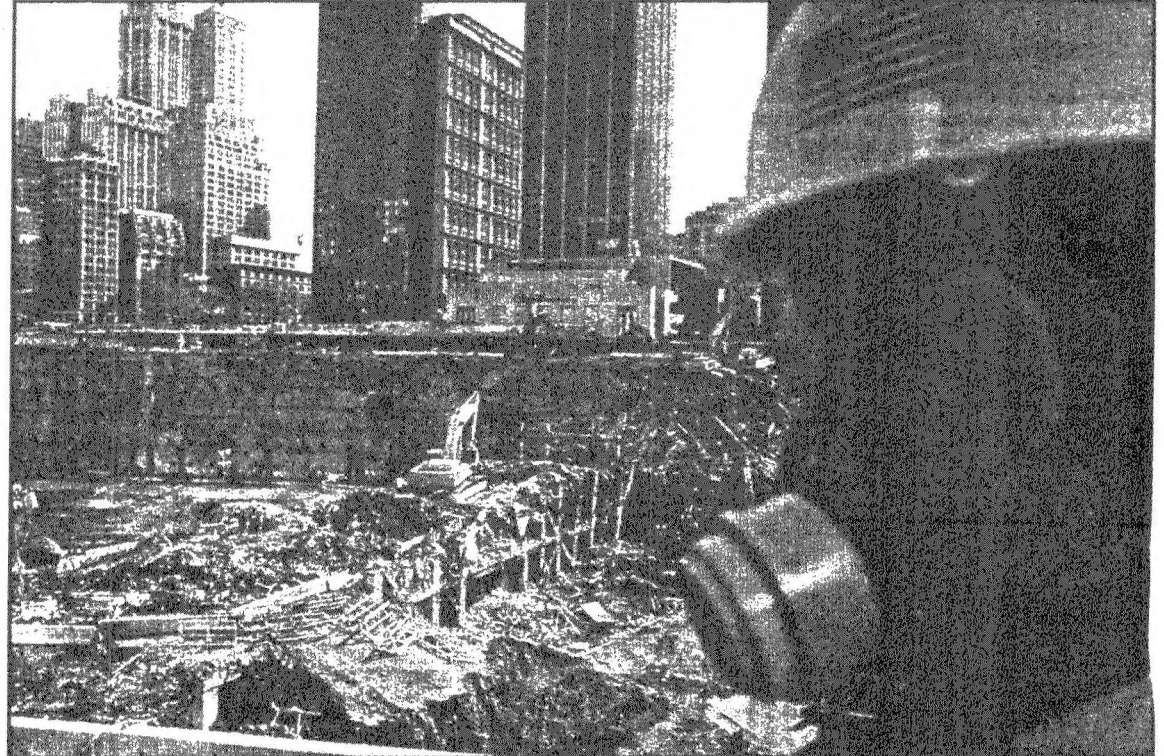
The National Institute of Health study found a two-fold increase in low birth weights among babies born to pregnant women who were either in or around the World Trade Center on Sept. 11.

It also found that one-quarter of rescue workers at Ground Zero suffered from "World Trade Center cough" and "profound adverse effects on respiratory health."

"The collapse of the towers generated thousands of tons of particulate matter comprised of cement dust, glass fibers, asbestos, lead . . . many of which significantly increased the subjects' susceptibility to bronchial spasms and asthma" said the study's chief author, Dr. Philip Landrigan, chair of the environmental medicine program at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Landrigan said: "These respiratory effects were most pronounced in subjects who were in or around the WTC buildings during the first 12 hours of the disaster."

Rescue workers examined 2 1/2 years after the attack had increased instances of coughs, wheezing, shortness of breath, and hyper-sensitive bronchial tubes directly related to the intensity and duration of their exposure. More than 30% of fire-fighters who had at least moderate exposure at Ground Zero suffer from



A report released yesterday found that one out of four rescue workers who were exposed the longest to the intense smoke, dust and chemicals from the collapse of the World Trade Center are now suffering from profound respiratory problems.

chronic bronchial spasms that are triggered by commonplace pollutants such as cigarette smoke or car exhaust.

Mice exposed to the dust suffered the same type of bronchial ailments, the study found.

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS:

- Will pulmonary disease persist in 9/11 workers exposed to dust?
- Will instances of mesothelioma, a type of cancer related to asbestos exposure, increase?
- Will exposure to toxins increase risk of cancer, diabetes and other chronic disease?
- Will babies born with low birth weight suffer long-term problems?

Source: National Institute of Health

The research found that pregnant women who were inside the towers or lived within a 10-block radius had smaller babies, but ruled out post-traumatic stress disorder as a factor and said it was caused by air pollutants.

Residents who live within a one-mile-radius of the World Trade Center site also reported that they had more breathing problems than people who lived in other areas.

The study expressed concerns about the health consequences of asbestos exposure, noting hundreds of tons of it were blasted free when the North Tower fell.

For a copy of the NIH's "Health and Environmental Consequences of the WTC Disaster," check <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov>

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