

the defined benefit plan and international growth. Mary Kay had a defined benefit retirement program expense of \$2.2 mil., compared to \$1 mil. in the first quarter of 1991. The company also reported a \$7.7 mil. noncash cost in the first quarter associated with the revaluation of its stock option plan.

TALC HAS "MODEST" ASSOCIATION WITH OVARIAN CANCER when used in the perineal area, researchers from the Obstetrics and Gynecology Epidemiology Center of Harvard Medical School's Brigham and Women's Hospital concluded in a recently published study. The authors, Bernard Harlow, PhD, et. al., stated that "there is an association, albeit modest, between ovarian cancer and perineal talc use." The study, "Perineal Exposure to Talc and Ovarian Cancer Risk," was published in the July issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

The study results "support the concept that a lifetime pattern of perineal talc use may increase the risk for epithelial ovarian cancer but is unlikely to be the etiology for the majority of epithelial ovarian cancers," the scientists said. However, they advise, "Given the poor prognosis for ovarian cancer, any potentially harmful exposures should be avoided, particularly those with limited benefits."

The researchers interviewed 235 caucasian women diagnosed with epithelial ovarian cancer and 239 controls of similar age, race and residence between 1984 and 1987.

Nearly half (49%) of the women interviewed who were diagnosed with cancer said they used talc for feminine hygiene purposes, compared to 39% of the controls.

Subjects who were estimated to have made over 10,000 applications of talc while they were ovulating and had an intact genital tract showed the "greatest ovarian cancer risk" associated with talc. The study noted that this subgroup accounts for only 14% of the women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. Risk of ovarian cancer was also "significantly elevated" among those who had perineal exposure to talc daily or over a period more than 10 years.

Of the types of application studied, "direct perineal application produced the greatest risk." This was the most frequent type of application reported. Use as a dusting powder on sanitary napkins or underwear, through husband's application or in storage of diaphragms, or a combination of the two "showed no appreciable increased risk for ovarian cancer," the scientists said.

The researchers were not able to determine whether all talc or only talc that is contaminated with asbestos is associated with increased cancer risk. They noted, "Because of the difficulty in obtaining complete and detailed history of powders used, the issue...may need to be settled by animal experiments."

The Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, in a response statement, said it is "confident that the information available continues to support the safety in use of cosmetic grade talc."

The Harlow paper is an update of research begun in 1984. After preliminary results from the study were released that year, CTEA sponsored a nine-month study at Battelle Pacific Northwest Labs on the translocation of talcum powder. The study, conducted in monkeys, concluded that "no measurable quantities of talc...translocated through the cervix to the uterine cavity and beyond" ("The Rose Sheet" March 25, 1985, In Brief). The Harlow study notes that the Battelle research "was not able to address the effects of long-term use or coitus, which might facilitate translocation."