

Mesotelioma maligno della pleura nella donna

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KEY WORDS

Asbestos; mesothelioma; female; pleura

SUMMARY

«Malignant mesothelioma of the pleura among women». **Background:** *The epidemiological features of mesothelioma among women differ from those observed among men.* **Objectives:** *To trace the outline of pleural mesothelioma among women in the Monfalcone area, Italy.* **Methods:** *Thirty-three malignant mesotheliomas of the pleura observed in female patients at the Hospital of Monfalcone, Italy, in the period 1979-2002 were reviewed. The diagnosis was based on/or confirmed by necropsy findings in 30 cases. Occupational and social histories were obtained from the patients themselves or from their relatives by personal or telephone interviews. In 29 necropsy cases thoracic cavities were examined for the presence of pleural plaques. Routine lung section were examined for asbestos bodies in 30 cases. In 21 cases asbestos bodies were isolated and counted after chemical digestion of lung tissue.* **Results:** *The age of the patients ranged between 48 and 89 years (mean 72.85, median 73.00). All the patients had histories of exposure to asbestos, single in 25 cases and mixed in 8. Exposure at home due to cleaning of work clothes was the most frequent type of exposure. Various patients had been exposed in non-asbestos textile industries (cotton mills). Unusual types of exposure occurred in some cases (distillery, small sodium carbonate factory, starch factory). The latency periods (time intervals elapsed between first exposure to asbestos and diagnosis of the tumour), calculated in 23 cases, ranged from 34 to 62 years. Pleural plaques were found in 21 cases. Twelve patients showed asbestos bodies on routine lung sections. The asbestos body burden ranged between only a few bodies and 92,000/g dried tissue.* **Conclusions:** *In contrast with other series of mesothelioma among women, all the present cases were attributable to asbestos. The detection of objective signs of exposure (pleural plaques, lung asbestos bodies) played a key role in attribution.*

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