

Mesoteliomi pleurici da insolita e ignorata esposizione professionale ad amianto. Ruolo dei Servizi territoriali di prevenzione nell'individuazione della pregressa esposizione lavorativa

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KEY WORDS

Mesothelioma, asbestos exposure, resins, mineral charge

SUMMARY

«Two cases of pleural mesothelioma following unusual and ignored exposure to asbestos. The role of Occupational Health and Safety Service in identifying past occupational exposure». Background: In Italy there was a wide use of asbestos in various manufacturing sectors and for many different uses, some of which are still partly or completely unknown. A detailed reconstruction of the work histories of mesothelioma patients made it possible, in some cases, to identify ignored circumstances of asbestos exposure. Moreover, the identification of cluster of cases takes on special significance in suggesting a possible previous asbestos exposure, where the information collected on single cases do not imply as much. Objectives: This report concerns two cases of malignant mesothelioma that occurred in two workers employed in the same processes in a small factory that manufactured and repaired electric motors for hand tools. Methods and results: In the Province of Brescia (one million inhabitants) a Mesothelioma Register is in operation. The first case was classified, according to Re.Na.M.1996 criteria (National Mesothelioma Register) as "unknown" occupational exposure. The identification of a second case, that was discovered thanks to the surveillance system of the Mesothelioma Register, encouraged the local Occupational Health and Safety Service to perform a more detailed investigation that revealed, for both subjects, previously unknown occupational exposure. This consisted of grinding, in a damp setting, electric motor parts bushed with phenolic thermosetting resins reinforced with chrysotile asbestos. Moreover, weekly cleaning of the plants could have been an occasion for dust dispersion. It is likely that this exposure did not last long and was limited in extent. Other similar reports of such circumstances of occupational exposure were not available in the literature. Conclusions: The results confirm the high information value of systematic collection of incidental cases in the population, which is feasible thanks to the disease register, and the significant role of the local Occupational Health Services in demonstrating past asbestos exposure.

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