

Mesoteliomi maligni nelle confezioni abbigliamento: un'ulteriore fonte di esposizione ad amianto

P.G. BARBIERI, ANNA SOMIGLIANA*, R. GIRELLI, SANDRA LOMBARDI, R. FESTA, S. SILVESTRI**

Servizio Prevenzione e Sicurezza Ambienti di Lavoro, ASL Brescia

* UO Aria, Centro di Microscopia Elettronica, ARPA Lombardia Dipartimento di Milano

** U.O. Epidemiologia Ambientale - Occupazionale. Centro per lo Studio e la Prevenzione Oncologica, Firenze

KEY WORDS

Malignant mesothelioma; occupational asbestos exposure; clothing sewing-machine

SUMMARY

«**Malignant mesothelioma in garment sewing-machine workers**». **Background:** Due to poor information collected through patient interviews, a considerable number of malignant mesothelioma (MM) cases still remain classified as “unknown” asbestos exposure in the Italian Mesothelioma Registry (Re.Na.M). At the same time, some occupational asbestos exposures, which were previously unknown, have been demonstrated in certain types of work, i.e., in agriculture and in the textile industry. **Objectives:** The aim of this research was to investigate the possible past occupational exposure to asbestos in clothing workers using sewing-machines. **Methods:** The MM cases were collected from the Mesothelioma Registry of Brescia. Work histories were obtained via a standardized questionnaire. Investigations were conducted in sewing-machine maintenance workshop in order to collect information regarding the possible use of asbestos parts. In addition, the use of asbestos friction materials and the use of insulated asbestos materials was checked in the clothing divisions by interviewing the management and maintenance workers of two companies where cases of MM were observed. **Results:** The Mesothelioma Registry of Brescia identified and collected 10 MM cases with past work in the clothing industry: 6 used sewing-machines and 4 were self-employed tailors. The search for asbestos materials gave positive results as the use of friction materials had been widespread since the 1950's in all types of sewing-machines; in addition, asbestos materials were used to insulate some parts of the ironing equipment and the steam pipelines. **Conclusion:** The results of this investigation suggest assigning at least “possible occupational asbestos exposure” to those cases employed in clothing manufacture since the 1950's, who used sewing-machines or pressing machines, according to the Re.Na.M guidelines. Other possible occupational exposures to asbestos in this working sector cannot be excluded; when the simple interview of patients does not reveal such exposures further investigations are needed in order to demonstrate all the possible circumstances of exposure.