

*FD Liddell. Ann Occup Hyg. Jul (2001) Vol. 45(5) p 341-56.*

Both cigarette smoke and inhaled asbestos fibres are widely believed to be independent causes of lung cancer. Assessment of how these agents act in combination is important for determining the degree of risk potentially associated with each agent.

The condition is relatively rare in non-smokers, making it difficult to obtain a statistically significant control population for epidemiological study.

The author of the above review proposes that this uncertainty accounts for much of the variation that has complicated the evaluation.

After re analysis the author concludes that the best estimate of the relative asbestos effect (RAE) is 2.04, with 95% confidence interval 1.28-3.25.

Comment

Based on the above analysis the author proposes that the risk of lung cancer due to asbestos is reduced by co-smoking.

Relative asbestos effect is in principle an appropriate measure upon which to base decisions as to contribution.

The proposal is likely to generate some debate among compensators.

---

