

Asbestos

Bongiovanni M, et al. Cancer. 2001 Sep 1;92(5) p 1245-50.

The prognosis of pleural malignant mesothelioma (PMM) is almost universally poor; typical survival, 4-12 months after diagnosis, but a few have a relatively long survival; over 2 years. The objective of this study was to evaluate the use of two patient proteins (p27(kip1) and MIB-1) as prognostic indicators of survival in PMMs. MIB-1 indicates proliferative activity, p27(kip1) indicates immunoreactivity.

Extended survival will have implications for care costs and could be a factor in the management of claims.

27 cases with a relatively long-term survival (> 24 months) were compared with a control group of 36 who had typical survival times.

The expression of the p27(kip1) was significantly higher in the long-term survival group compared with the control (short survival) group (81.41% vs. 31.94%; $P < 0.0001$). Proliferative activity was significantly higher in short than long survival cases (43.53% vs. 14.11%; $P < 0.0001$).

The authors conclude that combined expression of high/low p27(kip1) and low/high Ki-67 values identified with 100% specificity and sensitivity long versus short survivors.

Comment

Based on a review of the abstract only. Age profile of the cases and controls would be of interest as would date of tissue sampling and type of mesothelioma.

If accurate, the simple test could have implications for the management of mesothelioma cases.

P values are a statistical test, in this case a test of the likelihood that two values really are different. Experience suggests $P < 0.001$ implies a true difference, but not in every case.

