

Neumann V, et al. *Int Arch Occup Environ Health*. 2001 Aug;74(6) p 383-95.

A study of lung dust and mesothelioma.

Three types of mesothelioma were found in 1605 cases (95% male): biphasic (61%), epitheloid (29%) and sarcomatoid (10%).

Mean age at first diagnosis was 60.4 years. The mean survival time from time of symptom onset was 13.5 months.

Clinical features, occupational histories, and asbestos body concentrations were analysed.

Patients with epitheloid subtypes had a longer survival time (16.9 months) than those with biphasic (13.1 months) and sarcomatoid subtypes (5.5 months).

73% presented with pleural effusions as initial symptoms of the disease.

There was no association between histological subtypes and the asbestos burden of the lungs.

There was no association between lung asbestos burdens and survival times.

About 70% of the patients had a history of occupational exposure to asbestos dust.

25.6% had asbestos-associated lung fibroses, in 40.7% of the cases pleural plaques were identified.

#### Comment

Confirmation of the difficulty of establishing the date/source of causal (and therefore potentially negligent) exposure. Where a history of asbestos exposure was clear, latency between first exposure and diagnosis was 38yrs on average.

Type of asbestos (brown, blue, white...) exposure was not determined, but general opinion is that any respirable asbestos dust could be a cause.

