

Title:

Who is at Risk for Mesothelioma?

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430

Summary:

This article explains who is at risk for Mesothelioma.

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Mesothelioma, asbestos, cancer, lung, lung cancer

Article Body:

Mesothelioma, the deadly disease which has topped news headlines for the last decade, is contracted through exposure to airborne fibers of asbestos. Sadly, the under-regulation of asbestos usage in years past, and arguably still today, exposed millions to airborne fibers and as a result thousands contracted the disease.

It can be safely said that almost everyone in the world has been exposed to asbestos in varying degrees. Because of the unique nature of the disease, even those who have suffered only minimal exposure are at risk of contracting the disease. In effect, virtually everyone has some risk of contracting Mesothelioma.

But this sort of statement perhaps oversteps the bounds of rationality. While it is certainly true that individuals who have been exposed to small amounts of asbestos for relatively short periods of time have contracted the disease, this is a rarity rather than a regularity. In fact, the vast majority of Mesothelioma cases involve individuals who were exposed to airborne asbestos fibers for intense and extended periods of time.

The industries most in danger of prolonged exposure and thus of contraction are shipbuilding trades, asbestos mining and milling, textile manufacturing, insulation work in construction, and brake repair personnel. There are, however, some other minor factors which can affect the likelihood of contracting the disease. Among these is radiation exposure. There have been causes in which individuals who were exposed to radiation have subsequently displayed signs of and ultimately contracted mesothelioma. However, empirical studies to attempt to verify this correlation have not proven out this claim very strongly.

Another more certain cause of the disease was the taking of the Polio vaccine

between 1955 and 1963. Some batches of this vaccine were contaminated with Simian Virus 40 which has been detected in a host of rare cancers including Mesothelioma.

Those involved in construction or who lived in homes in the Cappadocian region of Turkey are also particularly at risk. In this region, homebuilders used Erionite, which is a type of zeolite silica stone. Exposure to the fibrous strands of this building material have led to an annual death rate of roughly 1% of the population which dies of mesothelioma each year in Turkey.

One of the most influential factors affecting Mesothelioma contraction is genetics. Some individuals who have been exposed to long periods and high quantities of asbestos have not contracted the disease. As a result, doctors have concluded that genetics play a major role in determining whether or not patients contract the disease. Unfortunately, the gene variability which offers some resistance to the disease also means that some are particularly vulnerable to asbestos exposure.