

Title:

Mesothelioma Surgery

Word Count:

454

Summary:

Mesothelioma is a rare, deadly form of cancer which can occur in a number of types. Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos, a group of natural fibres which are extremely dangerous if inhaled as fibres.

Keywords:

mesothelioma, cancer, asbestos, pericardial, peritoneal, pleural, malignant, symptoms, treatment

Article Body:

Mesothelioma is a rare, deadly form of cancer which can occur in a number of types. Mesothelioma is caused by exposure to asbestos, a group of natural fibres which are extremely dangerous if inhaled as fibres. When fibres are inhaled they become lodged in the alveoli of the lungs and over a period of time these fibres make tissue and cells abnormal and cause mesothelioma cancer. Pleural mesothelioma is the most common form of mesothelioma cancer, accounting for approximately 75% of all mesothelioma cases. The next most common form, peritoneal mesothelioma, accounts for 20% of all mesothelioma cases and pericardial mesothelioma accounts for the remaining 5%. Pleural mesothelioma affects the lining of the lungs, peritoneal mesothelioma attacks the peritoneum, which is the lining of the abdomen and pericardial mesothelioma affects the tissue surrounding the heart. All three of these types of cancer occur in extremely important areas of the human body and this is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to treat. Treatment methods such as radiation therapy can only be conducted with strict radiation dosage restrictions due to the possibility of damaging a vital organ such as the lungs or the heart.

Aggressive mesothelioma surgery is undertaken only by the strongest of mesothelioma patients because weaker patients are at risk of death within the first month after the operation. An experienced doctor will evaluate a patient before deciding that surgery is the best treatment method. He will take into account age, medical record, disabilities, allergies, sex, even weight. The operation will then take place. Mesothelioma surgery consists of cutting open a patient and removing the majority of cancerous cells from either the lining of the lungs, abdomen or heart in an attempt to gain long term control over the

cancer. Due to the proximity of the cancer to major organs of the body, the operation can only be performed by extremely skilled surgeons. There is a chance that a patient will die during the operation.

A second type of mesothelioma surgery is called palliative procedures. This is a far less dangerous and aggressive form of surgery which does not attempt to gain long term control over the cancer. Palliative procedures are designed to lessen the symptoms for a patient when it is almost certain that the patient will die inevitably from the cancer.

Mesothelioma surgery can also be coupled with radiation therapy and chemotherapy in what is known as dual therapy. Patients would undergo surgery to get rid of the majority of the cancerous mesothelioma cells and then chemotherapy and radiation therapy would be used to kill off any remaining cells. This combination of treatments has proved to be effective and has one of the highest success rates for treatments of mesothelioma cancer.