39. Incidence trends and gender differences in malignant mesothelioma in New South Wales, Australia

Introduction

The issue of malignant mesothelioma in women is also important in Asia especially in relation to non-occupational exposure to asbestos.

Critical appraisal

Based on a comparative study between mesothelioma data in the Central Cancer Registry and the registry of the NSW Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Board, the authors found that the mean latency is increasing, and increasing numbers of "nonoccupational" cases are being reported.

Unique keywords

New South Wales, Australia, women, gender difference, mesothelioma

Abstract

Objectives: Features of malignant mesothelioma reportedly differ between men and women, including occupational asbestos exposure, histological subtype, and median survival. In this study, incidence trends and clinical features for malignant mesothelioma were compared between genders in New South Wales (NSW), where notification of malignant mesothelioma to the Central Cancer Registry is a statutory requirement.

Methods: Notifications to the Central Cancer Registry were compared with those to the registry of the NSW Workers' Compensation (Dust Diseases) Board. The latter includes occupational and clinical data.

Results: Of the 3,090 cases of malignant mesothelioma reported to the Central Cancer Registry between 1972 and 2004, 456 (15%) were female. Altogether 1,995 malignant mesotheliomas were compensated between 1969 and 2004, of which 105 (5%) occurred among women. The incidence increased for both genders by approximately 15-fold. Median survival was similar for the men and women for all of the cases (7 versus 6 months), but was better among the women who received compensation (8.5 versus 10.4 months, P<0.0001). The mean disease latency (42.8 years) increased over the study period (P<0.001)

Conclusions: In New South Wales over the last 30 years, the total number of malignant mesotheliomas and the number of compensated cases of malignant mesothelioma have risen for both genders. The mean latency is increasing, and increasing numbers of "nonoccupational" cases are being reported. Survival remains poor.
Fact 1: The Central Cancer Registry in New South Wales, Australia recorded 456 women and 2,634 men mesothelioma cases between 1972 and 2004.

Fact 2: The most common occupations for the women with mesothelioma were steam press operator (15%), process worker (14%) and clerical worker (14%). The most common industry for the women was textile manufacturing.

Fact 3: The most common occupation for the male mesothelioma patients was carpenter (20%) followed by fitter (16%), trade assistant (9%) and electrician (9%).

Fact 4: The latency period (the time between the year of first exposure to asbestos and the year of diagnosis) was significantly shorter for peritoneal malignant mesothelioma among both men (38.8 versus 44 years, P<0.01) and women (29.7 versus 43.6 years, P<0.01) compared with their pleural counterparts.

Fact 5: Mesothelioma survival was poor among both genders but in overall, the women compensated for malignant mesothelioma survived longer than men (median survival 10.4 months for the women versus 8.5 months for the men, P<0.0001).

References