

Though there appears to be no scientific evidence that asbestosis and lung cancer are interrelated, it has been shown in one study that approximately 50 percent of patients certified as suffering from asbestosis died of or with lung cancer [3]. There appears to be no regular correlation between the severity of asbestosis and the occurrence of mesothelioma. In fact, it is unusual to find significant asbestosis with pleural mesothelioma. However, asbestosis is frequently observed in association with peritoneal mesothelioma, which generally appears to be associated with heavier asbestos exposure [4].

The latency period for developing asbestosis seems to be somewhat shorter than that required to develop cancer. One study, which found asbestosis 11 times more common among pipe insulators in ship construction than in a control group, determined that asbestosis first appeared 13 years after initial exposure, and that the incidence was 38 percent after 20 years [4].

2.2.2

Respiratory Cancers

Lung cancer was first linked to asbestos exposure in 1935 when three cases were found at autopsy in asbestos textile workers. In 1949 in England autopsies of 225 persons, known to have asbestosis, found that 31 or 13.2 percent had lung cancer. This was not characteristic of other pneumoconioses. In 1954 a study found 10 times more lung cancer in persons employed 5 years or more in occupations involved in asbestos exposure than in a control group. Animal studies have confirmed these results [4].

Early diagnosis and surgical removal of lesions increases the survival rate. Irradiation, chemotherapy and immunotherapy may be helpful. It is generally regarded as a chronic incurable disease in which treatment may be 3-4-6C