Malignant pleural mesothelioma

Despite being rare, the incidence of mesothelioma worldwide continues to increase; it is yet to reach its peak. Researchers suggest that for every four to five cases of mesothelioma reported, one case will be overlooked. How does malignant pleural mesothelioma develop?

Other risk factors for malignant pleural mesothelioma include:

- Male gender
- Age
- Other factors

When microscopic asbestos fibres are inhaled, it is difficult for our bodies to exhale them. This damage to the lining can lead to the development of malignant pleural mesothelioma.

Exposure to ionising radiation and SV40 virus. Mesothelioma is five times more common in men than women. More than 75% of newly diagnosed patients are over 65. Exposure to asbestos through working in a number of specific industries.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral. The microscopic fibres are extremely durable and resistant to fire. As a result, asbestos was the material of choice for a number of products until the late 1970s, when it became evident that asbestos posed a threat to human health and safety. It can take between 20 and 40 years from the initial exposure to the onset of disease symptoms. This is known as the latency period.

In its advanced stages, when most patients are diagnosed, the average survival time is approximately 12 months. A number of diagnostic tests may be carried out to ensure a correct diagnosis. These can include:

- X-ray
- CT scan
- Thoracentesis
- Thoracoscopy
- Biopsy

Other treatment options for patients with malignant pleural mesothelioma are surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Current treatment options are very limited and the survival time is particularly poor.

References