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Did Mrs. Harig's Work at Reid-Hayden Cause Her to Develop Mesothelioma?

1. Exposure to asbestos was in all likelihood the cause of her mesothelioma

-- Mesothelioma is a "signal tumor" for asbestos exposure. It is a disease for which histories are obtainable, usually from surviving relatives, of occupational, household, and neighborhood exposure. These histories are recalled despite the fact that they occurred 30 years and more preceding the death of the victim, and thus tend to understate the actual asbestos exposures of the deceased.

Newhouse and Thompson, Greenberg and Lloyd Davies, Borow, Lieben and Pistawka, Selikoff, Dalquen et al.

Anderson et al. (family cases); also N & T appendix (cases with brief employment)

Seidman et al. (short-term exposure and lung cancer, implying mesothelioma risk as well)

shipyard workers

clerical workers at asbestos plants - Wood and Gloyne (asbestosis)
Owen (mesothelioma)
and shipyards - Selikoff (X-ray abnormalities)

-- Mrs. Harig has a history of 15 years of "indirect occupational exposure" to asbestos, as a clerical worker for Reid-Hayden. This office exposure is most comparable to household exposure of asbestos workers' family members, and most likely exceeded typical asbestos factory neighbor exposure.

comparative air measurements in Nicholson paper

2. Mrs. Harig's work at Reid-Hayden was in all probability the asbestos exposure that caused her to develop mesothelioma.

-- The 36-year lapsed period from the onset of exposure (1940) to clinical signs of the disease is in accord with the long latency associated with asbestos-caused mesothelioma.

N & T table 7 (factory workers 29.4 yrs; domestic cases 37.9 years; insulation workers 38.4 years; neighbors of plants 48.6 yrs)

-- Seidman factory worker study revealed excess lung cancer rates for men who worked in an asbestos plant for 1 month and less, followed up 30 years later. Mrs. Harig worked at another asbestos plant that was poorly controlled, for about 180 months. Using a linear dose-risk approximation, Mrs. Harig would have been expected to incur an equivalent cancer risk as a factory worker got in 1 month, if her level of asbestos dust in the office air was 1/180th as high as the dust level in the plant. An earlier report noted cases of mesothelioma also at the factory studied by Seidman (Selikoff et al.).

-- Borow's report of 72 cases of mesothelioma shows that the disease was common among workers who manufactured asbestos products, including those used at Reid-Hayden. Borow's cases came from Manville, New Jersey, where Johns-Manville had its principal asbestos products manufacturing plant. Reid-Hayden used Johns-Manville asbestos-cement panels exclusively.