One of the most detailed studies and one which deserves the most serious consideration is that reported by Doll [63] in 1955. This study reviews causes of death among asbestos workers based on coroners' records. It also attempts to estimate the risk by studying records of men who worked for at least 20 years in exposed situations. Doll concluded that lung cancer was a specific industrial hazard of certain asbestos workers and that, after 20 years of exposure, the risk is ten times as great as for the general population.

This article is important for several reasons, in addition to the definite conclusions at which it arrives. For example, it begins by stating that "in view of the infrequency of asbestosis, this large number of cases (61 cases of lung cancer) suggests—but does not prove—that lung cancer is an occupational hazard of asbestos workers." Neither this article or any previous one which we have examined presents any figures to prove that asbestosis is an infrequent occurrence. Estimates of the number of persons potentially exposed to asbestos dust in the United States alone vary from 10,000 to 35,000 and the incidence of asbestosis of any degree might be higher than Doll imagines.

This study, like so many others, involves autopsy records. The number of persons involved in the statistical analysis is only 113 representing only 1,042.25 man years of life. It is also true that in selecting men who had been employed for at least 20 years, the study automatically excluded those who died from other causes after shorter employment.