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exposure it would be necessary to know the numbers of men and women at risk over the past 50 years in order to assess the relative susceptibility of the sexes to mesothelioma.

Age at death

The distribution of age at death of confirmed cases is presented in Fig. 1: there is no significant difference between cases diagnosed by the two groups of pathologists (mean age: UICC, 59.4 ± 0.9 ; other pathologists, 60.2 ± 1.3). For comparison the age distributions for all malignant neoplasms and for carcinoma of the bronchus and lung (Registrar General, 1970) are also shown. The mean age at death from mesothelioma is significantly younger ($P < 0.05$) than that for bronchial carcinoma and 'all neoplasms'. This may be due in part or in whole either to the greater chance of identifying occupational cancers within the working age compared with the retired or to earlier death from mesothelioma associated with occupational exposure to a carcinogen.

Exposure to asbestos

In Table 4 it can be seen that of 246 confirmed cases 167 (68%) had definite occupational exposure to asbestos and a further 29 were possibly exposed, either at work or at home. There were, however,

TABLE 4
NOTIFICATIONS TO MESOTHELIOMA REGISTER
ANALYSED BY ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

Asbestos exposure history	No. of definite mesotheliomas	No. undecided, inadequate material, or definite alternative diagnoses
Definite occupational exposure	167	63
Possible occupational exposure	16	17
Neighbourhood, domestic or hobby ..	13	10
None	38	57
Not obtained	12	20

still 38 (15%) for whom careful enquiry failed to elicit any exposure whatever. In the remaining notifications ('undecided', 'inadequate material', 'definite alternative diagnosis') nearly one third were without apparent exposure, and those with definite occupational history formed only 38% of the total. The differences between these groups are significant ($P < 0.001$) but may be affected by bias towards

Total

(11.9%)

(12.5%)

(12.2%)

2 males
(Scotland)

s (USA)

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land 1967-68

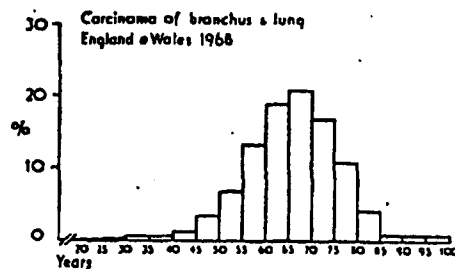
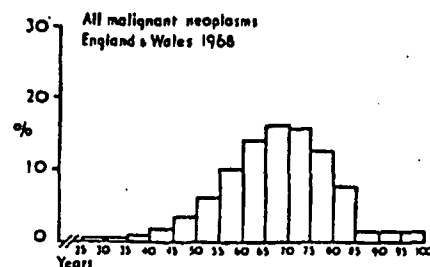
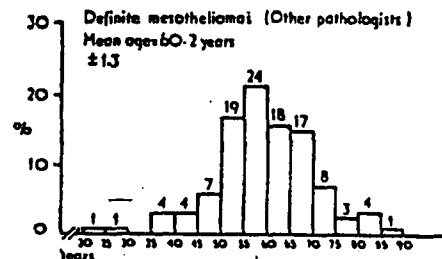
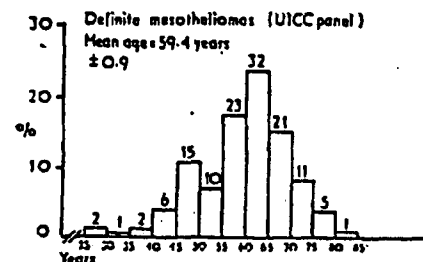


FIG. 1. Age distributions at death.