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ABSTRACT

A study of the respiratory function was carried out in 724 male subjects exposed to inhalation of asbestos dust (workers of a mining company of chrysotile in Piedmont; insulators; workers engaged in the production of asbestos-cement, of asbestos textiles or of car brakes and friction clutch discs). In all subjects the vital capacity, VEMS and D_{LCO} at rest (steady state method) were determined. In some cases the residual volume was measured, the resistances of the airways (body plethysmography), of respiratory dead space, of arterio-alveolar CO_2 gradient and also of D_{LCO} at work on a cycloergometer. The subjects were subdivided into 5 groups on the basis of the chest X-ray pattern (UICC classification, Cincinnati): 1st group with X-ray pattern 0/0 or 0/1 and with asbestos exposure less than 10 years (average exposure 5.7 years); 2nd group with X-ray pattern 0/0 or 0/1 and with asbestos exposure longer than 10 years (average exposure 21.2 years); 3rd group with X-rays 1/0 or 1/1; 4th group with X-rays 1/2, 2/1 or 2/2; 5th group with X-rays 2/3, 3/2 or 3/3. The results obtained cannot be summarized as follows. A ventilation insufficiency restrictive in type was observed;

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