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The mortality of male asbestos workers in mines and factories has been extensively investigated (Doll, 1955; Selikoff, Churg, and Hammond, 1964; McDonald *et al.*, 1971). There is less opportunity to examine the mortality of female workers although there is considerable evidence that women exposed to asbestos are at risk of developing asbestos-related cancers and asbestosis. Keal (1960) reported a high incidence of peritoneal tumours among women patients suffering from asbestosis. Enticknap and Smith (1964) reported three female deaths in their

series of 11 patient dying from peritoneal mesothelioma. Wagner, Sleggs, and Marchand (1966) found nine women with mesothelial tumours among 33 subjects in South Africa. Among 83 patients with a confirmed diagnosis of mesothelial tumour from the London Hospital (Newhouse and Thompson 1963), 42 were females. In Canada, approximately one-third of the mesothelial tumours reported over a 10-year period occurred in women (McDonald, Harper, El Attar, and McDonald, 1970). Mason and El-Attar (1967) included 228 women among

Here we describe who have been Methods of 1 factory have al Williams, 1967 56 years and Reliable information proportion of the trace more the principal difficulties, subsequent A further attempt who started in years between 1942, a period ourselves was information at the Register (NHS women yielded this encouragement and addresses, who started, who were sent to the (67%) members currently alive the Register of had either emigrated before 1952 and search of the identified the names whose current the NHSRC. Information about had been employed Of the 64 women were visited, 1 and a final search another 17 women 1968, 576 of the and 140 dead. dates of birth of known and the cohort at this

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