

State of the Art

Asbestos-Related Diseases of the Lung and Other Organs: Their Epidemiology and Implications for Clinical Practice^{1,2}

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Introduction

Although the fire-resistant qualities of asbestos have been recognized since ancient times (1, 2), its commercial exploitation was modest until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when as a result of the industrial revolution, the need arose to develop the means of insulating the steam engine (2). The discovery in 1877 and subsequent development in the 1880s of the extensive chrysotile deposits in eastern Quebec was followed by further exploitation of the already known and extensive deposits in the Ural mountains in Russia and of the more limited deposits in Italy and Cyprus (2, 3). The existence of blue asbestos deposits in the Cape (South Africa) was recorded in the early nine-

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