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Title: Epidemiology of pleural mesothelioma in Northern Sardinia (Italy) from 2000 to 2012

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Body: Introduction. Pleural mesothelioma (80% of all forms) has a documented asbestos exposure in 70% of cases. It's characterized by poor short term prognosis and its incidence is still high in developing countries, while in Italy it's 3,5-1,3/100000 in males and in females respectively. Incidence and survival rates in Sardinia aren't yet available. Aim. To calculate incidence and survival rates of pleural mesothelioma in Northern Sardinia from 2000 to 2012. Materials and methods. We examined: Health Districts data on discharge diagnosis and death cause (ICD-9-CM codes and subcodes); medical records of Northern Sardinia Health Centers patients. Incidence was calculated on current population of Sassari and Olbia-Tempio provinces and standardized by sex and age on regional population. Results. Total cases were 60: 78,3% males (M/F: 3,6); mean age 67,6 years. Occupational asbestos exposure was determined/highly probable in 55% of cases. Epithelial forms were 68,3%. Incidence: less than 1 case/100000 from 2000 to 2004, less than 2 from 2005 to 2010, again less than 1 in 2011 and 2012, steadily higher in males than in females (max rates: 2,8 and 0,6 respectively). Survival: 60% up to 1 year after diagnosis, while it falls to 28%, 22%, 20%, 18%, 12% up to 2, 3, 4, 5, more than 5 years respectively; median survival: 13 months (18 in epithelial forms) and not significantly related either with TNM staging or with a specific treatment. Conclusions. Incidence in Northern Sardinia is lower than at national level and much lower than in provinces that were asbestos industry based until 1992. Other differences compared to national data: median survival (13 vs 9 months) and percentage of epithelial forms (68% vs 51%).