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**TRENDS IN ASBESTOSIS AND MESOTHELIOMA MORTALITY IN GREAT BRITAIN**

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**Objectives** To explore possible reasons for a continuing increase in asbestosis mortality in Britain by examining age-specific male rates by birth cohort and comparing with those for mesothelioma.

**Methods** Asbestosis and mesothelioma rates were calculated using deaths from the asbestosis and mesothelioma registers and national population data. Age-specific rates by birth cohort were summarised in graphical format.

**Results** There is a strong increase in the asbestosis and mesothelioma rates with increasing age for the majority of birth cohorts. Rates continue to increase rapidly above age 80 for men born between the early 1900s to the mid 1920s particularly for asbestosis. The rate of asbestosis is highest at any given age for men born during the late 1920s. This contrasts with mesothelioma where the highest rate at any given age is for those born in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Asbestos rates at given ages are progressively lower for successive birth cohorts from 1930 onwards, although a strong increase with age is evident within each.

**Conclusions** That the birth cohort with the highest rates occurs earlier for asbestosis than mesothelioma could be consistent with asbestosis being caused by higher exposures than those necessary to cause mesothelioma, and that exposures associated with a risk of mesothelioma continued after those high enough to cause asbestosis had largely ceased. Mortality from asbestosis, even at old ages, appears to be determined mainly by exposures at young ages