



Letter to the Editor

Porcelain Factory Worker With Asbestos-related Mesothelioma

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Sir,

We read with interest the case report by Tsou and Luo¹ that was published in a recent issue of *Journal the Formosan Medical Association*, and would like to present our experience in relation to asbestos risk in porcelain factories in Italy.

The Lombardy Mesothelioma Registry (LMR) was established in 2000 as part of the Italian Mesothelioma Registry.² The LMR collects all incident cases of malignant mesothelioma of the pleura, peritoneum, pericardium, and tunica vaginalis of testis that have been diagnosed in people residing in the Lombardy region (a region with an estimated total population of 9.1 million) in the north of Italy.

Cases are actively reported to the LMR by the main services including pathology, pneumology, surgery, and oncology departments of each regional hospital. For each case the disease history, radiological and histological reports, and clinical records were collected. Asbestos exposure history was obtained from patients (or his/her next to kin) through a standardized questionnaire administered by trained interviewers. All records were reviewed by a panel composed

of a pneumologist, oncologist, pathologist, occupational health physician, industrial hygienist and epidemiologist.²

Among the 1848 cases of malignant mesothelioma analyzed by the LMR since 2000, six subjects were previously employed in porcelain factories that had manufactured ceramic sanitary, tiles, tableware, and household and gift items. The asbestos was used as a paneling in furnaces, in refractory plates and in trolleys carrying the raw pottery into furnaces for cooking or drying, in the balls of ball-mills making the dust for insulating the baths, in gloves and asbestos hot pads commonly employed as individual protection when handling hot pottery.

References

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