

## Ban of asbestos has saved lives

Banning of the use of asbestos in Sweden has two components. In the mid-1970s the use was restricted through an agreement between unions and employers in the construction industry and there was also a voluntary restriction in the use by the shipyard industry. In 1982 there was a ban through a legal decision. The use of asbestos decreased sharply in the mid-1970s.

We have compared the risk of pleural mesothelioma in Swedes who started their working career in the 1960s with Swedes started working in the mid-1970s or later. Pleural mesothelioma is a tumor strongly linked to asbestos, i.e. it is estimated that at least 90 % of the cases are caused by occupational exposure to asbestos in industrialized countries. Thus, we compared the risk for this tumor in Swedes born 1940-1949 with Swedes born 1955-1979. If the latter would have had the same risk as the former there would have been around 155 cases in Swedes born 1955-1979 between 1988 and 2012. However, there were only 35 cases. The calculations were adjusted for sex and age. This means that the ban by authorities and a “well-informed market” have saved around 120 persons below the age of 57 years getting pleural mesothelioma. Asbestos can also cause other diseases as e.g. lung cancer and lung fibrosis. Thus, the impact of the ban has been even larger than the figures above indicate.

### Publication

[Emerging evidence that the ban on asbestos use is reducing the occurrence of pleural mesothelioma in Sweden.](#)

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