

[Oxford University Team Develops Better Test for Mesothelioma](#)

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Scientists at Oxford University claim they have developed a more sensitive test for the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma than what is currently available.

The test quantifies levels of a protein closely linked to the cancer in fluid around the lungs.

Mesothelioma is an invariably fatal cancer and furthermore very difficult to treat because it does not seem to respond well to chemotherapy. Mesothelioma has even been found in people with either no history of exposure to asbestos or from unexpected sources such as hair salons. Because it can take many decades for the disease to develop, it can be hard to pinpoint exposure if you never worked in a field traditionally associated with asbestos exposure. Although laws preventing occupational exposure to asbestos are in place in the developed world, the long latency period means we have not seen the end of the asbestos epidemic. There are often no restrictions in developing countries regarding asbestos.

The new mesothelioma test researchers found ways of distinguishing mesothelioma as a cause of pleural effusion, the build-up of fluid in the pleural cavity surrounding the lungs. Doctors currently perform pleural fluid cytology, a lab test which looks for cancerous cells, but the Oxford team says this is not a very sensitive test.

The Oxford researchers used pleural fluid samples from over 200 patients who had been referred to a specialist respiratory clinic and looked at levels of the protein meothelin - which is released in high quantities in the pleural fluid of most patients with mesothelioma.

They discovered that the levels of meothelin were almost six times higher in patients with mesothelioma than those with secondary lung cancers.

Since mesothelioma is almost always fatal, the new test can mean earlier diagnosis and longer survival rates for patients diagnosed with the disease.

Attorney Tom Lamb represents people in personal injury and wrongful death cases involving mesothelioma or other asbestos cancers. The above article was posted originally on his blog, **Asbestos HUB** – with active links and readers' comments.
<http://AsbestosHUB.com>