



Mesothelioma

Malignant mesothelioma is a cancer that starts in cells in the linings of certain parts of the body, especially the chest or abdomen. A layer of specialized cells called mesothelium lines the inside of the chest, the abdomen, and the space around the heart. These cells also cover the outer surface of most of the internal organs. The mesothelium helps protect organs by making a special lubricating fluid that allows organs to move around. For example, this fluid makes it easier for the lungs to move inside the chest during breathing. Mesothelioma is fairly rare. About 3,000 new cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed each year in the United States.

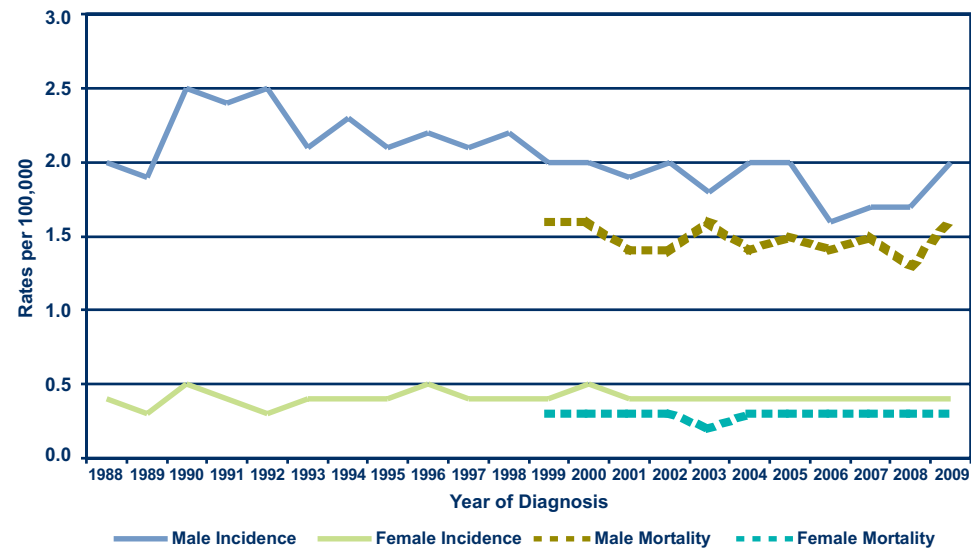
Incidence rates of mesothelioma cancer declined by an average of 1.7 percent per year among California

males from 1990 to 2009. Incidence rates among California females were stable over this time period. Mortality data for mesothelioma is only available from 1999 to 2009. Mortality rates among California males and

females were stable over this time frame (See Figure 1).

Mesothelioma incidence (I) and mortality (M) rates are highest among non-Hispanic whites (I=1.2

Figure 1: Age-Adjusted Mesothelioma Incidence and Mortality Rates by Sex in California, 1988-2009*

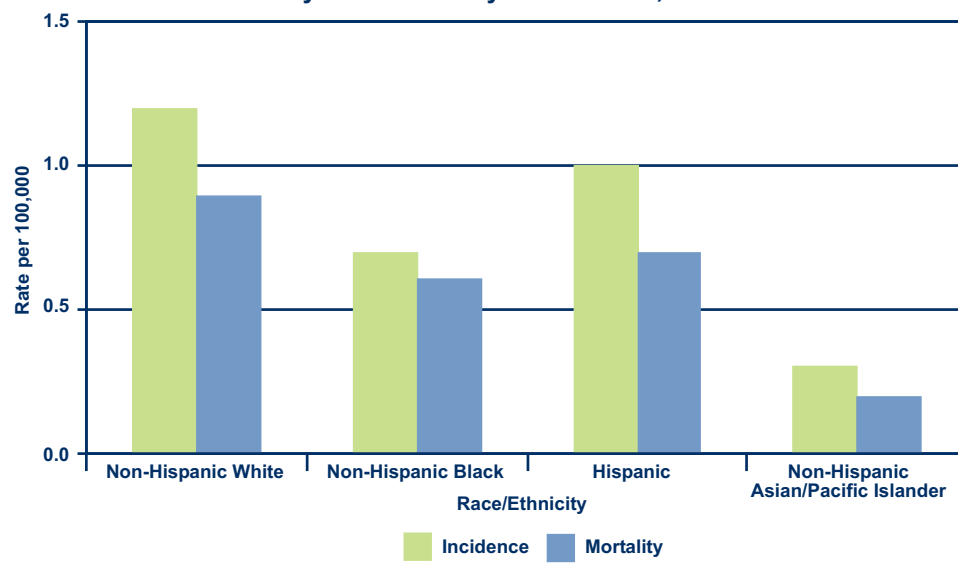


*Mortality data for mesothelioma is not available prior to 1999.
 Prepared by the Cancer Registry of Greater California
 Source: California Cancer Registry

per 100,000; M=0.9 per 100,000), followed by Hispanics (I=1.0 per 100,000; M=0.7 per 100,000), then non-Hispanic blacks (I=0.7 per 100,000; M=0.6 per 100,000), and are lowest among non-Hispanic Asians/Pacific Islanders (I=0.3 per 100,000; M=0.2 per 100,000) (See Figure 2).

In California from 2000 through 2009, the majority of mesothelioma patients were diagnosed at the distant stage (69.3 percent), with only 13.7 percent diagnosed at the regional stage and 9.6 percent at the localized stage. Five-year relative survival, a measure of the likelihood of surviving a specified cancer five years past diagnosis, is highest among those diagnosed at the localized stage, and similar for those with regional and distant stage diagnoses (Table 1).

Figure 2: Five-Year Age-Adjusted Mesothelioma Incidence and Mortality Rates by Race/Ethnicity In California, 2005-2009



Prepared by the Cancer Registry of Greater California
Source: California Cancer Registry

Table 1: Stage Distribution and Five-Year Relative Survival by Stage At Diagnosis for Mesothelioma (Males and Females Combined), California, 2000-2009

Stage at Diagnosis	Stage Distribution	Five-Year Relative Survival
Localized (Confined to Primary Site)	9.6%	16.2%
Regional (Spread to Regional Lymph Nodes)	13.7%	7.3%
Distant (Metastasized to Other Organs)	69.3%	6.6%
Unknown Stage	7.4%	9.5%

Source: California Cancer Registry
Prepared by the Cancer Registry of Greater California.