

## **Activities of Japan Association of Mesothelioma and Asbestos-Related Disease Victims and Their Families**

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### **Abstract**

#### **About our Association**

The 'Japan Association of Mesothelioma and Asbestos-Related Disease Victims and their Families' is a nationwide group of patients of asbestos-related diseases, such as, malignant pleural mesothelioma, malignant peritoneal mesothelioma, malignant pericardial mesothelioma, asbestos-related lung cancer, benign asbestos pleuritis and diffuse pleural thickening etc., and their families. The association was founded on February 7, 2004. Before then, those victims and their families felt lonely, but now they are uniting. As of August 15, 44 members and 31 supporters are registered.

#### **About patients**

The condition of each patient varies. Some are still fighting against disease after several years. But others have passed away during the past half-year, unfortunately.

There are many types of medical treatment: operations for the removal of the whole lung or part of the pleura, administration of anticancer drugs, and folk remedies including supplements. Sufferers enter the hospitals, go to outpatient department, use palliative care or stay in their homes.

The age of victims is getting younger – some are in their 30s and 40s. Asbestos exposure has mainly occurred in workplaces like construction sites. However, non-occupational and environmental exposure cases are also found.

#### **Actions of Association**

Operating a telephone consultation service about medical treatment and workers' compensation is our main activity. Our periodical newsletter and homepage are tools for information exchange. And, local meetings are held in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya.

We carried out a research on the real situation of victims and their families in June and called the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for improvements of those situations in August. Our requests cover health check systems, clear diagnosis and future treatments of mesothelioma, payments for folk remedies, workers' compensation and the existence asbestos in the environment.

We were not satisfied with the vague answers of the Ministry officials but participants asked many questions keenly.