

**Box 2: Statements on which there is broad consensus**

- Most, if not all, types of asbestos can cause cancer.
- Lung cancer and mesothelioma (pleural and peritoneal) can be caused by most, if not all, forms of asbestos.
- Asbestos can only cause cancer if the fibres are inhaled. If asbestos fibres do not come into human breathing zones, there is no risk.
- The bulk of the epidemiological evidence that we have about cancer risks due to asbestos was derived from studies of workers exposed in the early-to-mid 20th century. The levels of exposure were orders of magnitude greater than those that regulations have allowed in most Western countries for the past 20 years.
- For lung cancer and mesothelioma, the available epidemiological cohort studies of workers exposed to asbestos have exhibited a fairly wide range of "dose–response" relationships between estimated cumulative asbestos exposure and estimated risk.
- In Western countries, there have been dramatic increases in the reported incidence of mesothelioma over the past 40 years, especially among men.
- The asbestos industries do not have a proud record of openness and risk management.

[\[Return to text\]](#)