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Highlights:

- We examine the association between occupational asbestos exposure and lung cancer risk
- Excess risk for lung cancer in the lower lobes was 5 times higher
- Smokers increased their risk of lung cancer by 2 to 3 times
- The risk continued to increase until 30 years after cessation of exposure
- A strategy of smoking cessation potentially would have health promoting effects
- International collaboration for the follow-up of asbestos exposed workers is essential

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