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**Title:** A novel hypothesis in benign pleural thickening in asbestos exposed patients

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**Body:** Introduction Asbestos exposure is a well known cause of diffuse benign pleural thickening. We postulate, however, that pleural thickening can be triggered (or accelerated) by the development of a pleural effusion of unrelated aetiology, even heart failure, in an asbestos exposed patient. We suggest that the pleural thickening may not have developed without the combination of an unrelated pleural insult and asbestos exposure. Methods We have identified 6 asbestos exposed patients in whom we suspect this series of events to have occurred. One such patient is presented in this abstract. Results Patient 1 underwent mitral valve repair surgery. A pre-operative CXR demonstrated no evidence of significant pre-existing pleural disease. Post-operatively he developed bilateral pleural effusions, larger on the left.

Pleural aspiration confirmed a transudate. In the subsequent months he developed marked left sided pleural thickening with areas of rounded atelectasis.

Conclusions This novel hypothesis could have significant implications for compensation from asbestos-induced pleural disease. We believe there is enough evidence to warrant further and more detailed research into this area.