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El laberinto del amianto

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Rebelión

DEDICATORIA: Me es muy grato dedicar este modesto texto divulgativo, a nuestra entrañable amiga **FERNANDA GIANNASI**, en su doble condición de **Auditora Fiscal Laboral del Ministerio de Trabajo y Empleo**, de Brasil, actualmente ya en situación de jubilación, y en la de fundadora de la **Asociación Brasileña de Víctimas del Amianto**.



La denominación de “amianto” o “asbesto”, corresponde a un grupo de **seis** minerales fibrosos: crisotilo (el de uso más extendido), crocidolita (el más nocivo), tremolita (el más difundido a través de contaminación geológica de origen, como es el caso del talco industrial (usado, por ejemplo, para desmoldeo en la fabricación de neumáticos) o el talco cosmético (menos contaminado), la amosita o amianto marrón, la actinolita y la antofilita, de los cuales, inexistentes en España como yacimientos geológicos, tendremos a varios de ellos, como, por ejemplo, la crocidolita o la amosita.

Las patologías asbesto-relacionadas (son, **como mínimo**, doce -las más

frecuentes o con una etiología bien establecida y reconocida como tal-):

(01)- **la asbestosis**

(02)- los dedos curvados y/o como “palillos de tambor”(03)- los llamados "callos del amianto"

(04)- las placas pleurales

(05)- las atelectasias redondas

(06)- el engrosamiento pleural difuso

(07)- las **fibrosis extra-torácicas** (como, por ejemplo: las retro-peritoneales)

(08)- el *cor pulmonale* originado por otra patología asbesto-relacionada, como, porejemplo, la asbestosis

(09)- el cáncer de bronquios y/o de pulmón (con el importante **efecto sinérgico del tabaquismo**)

(10)- el cáncer de ovarios (11)-el cáncer de laringe (12)-el mesotelioma maligno

Los cánceres de ovarios y de laringe (reconocidos ambos de estos dos últimos por la Organización Mundial de la Salud, y por supuesto que lo son, en base a evidencias epidemiológicas sólidas).

Las primeras ocho enfermedades mencionadas, no son ningún tipo de cáncer, pero ciertamente que de **asbestosis** sí que se puede llegar a morir, si se llega a desarrollar lo suficientemente para ello, habida cuenta de que se trata de una afectación incurable, irreversible y de progresión indefinida de la restricción de la capacidad respiratoria, llegando a ser desencadenante del ya mencionado *cor pulmonale*.

El cáncer denominado **mesotelioma maligno**, según sus respectivos asentamientos anatómicos más frecuentes, son cuatro distintos:

- el pleural (de entre los mesoteliomas, el más frecuente de todos),

-el peritoneal,

-el **pericárdico**,

-y el **peri-testicular o gonadal**.

Algunas de estas dolencias asociadas etiológicamente al amianto, más que como enfermedades, pueden ser asimiladas a la condición de síntomas, como es el caso, por ejemplo, de los dedos alterados por la acción del asbesto.

De todos ellos, suele haber constancia de casos originados por exposición a cualquiera de los seis tipos de amianto existentes.

Se denomina como “**mesotelioma familiar**”, a la afectación, sincrónica o

metacrónica, de dos o más familiares, con o **sin** consanguineidad, afectados por el **mesotelioma maligno**, demostrándose así, que el factor decisivo en estos casos, es la mera convivencia en un mismo domicilio en el que la presencia de amianto deriva, ya sea por convivencia con un trabajador del amianto, ya sea por mera exposición medioambiental del domicilio común de los afectados, en la proximidad de una fuente natural, como son los asentamientos de origen geológico del amianto, o ya sea por vecindad con alguna actividad humana, relacionada con la utilización del asbesto o amianto, como es el caso, por ejemplo, de los **astilleros navales**, de las **zonas portuarias** de descarga de sacos con contenido de amianto en bruto, o de las fábricas de **textiles de amianto**, o de las de amianto-cemento, o los **talleres de reparación de vehículos** dotados de pastillas de freno, cuando están **elaboradas con amianto**, etc.

Por lo que respecta a las placas pleurales (entre las que hay que distinguir entre las no calcificadas y las parcial o totalmente calcificadas), a lo que se considera **enfermedad**, es solamente si producen **una restricción de la capacidad pulmonar**.

No obstante, lo que sí son, en cualquier caso, es un indicador epidemiológico muy sensible a la exposición medioambiental a alguna de las clases de amianto, dado que su influencia se extiende hasta a distancias de **decenas de kilómetros**, con atenuación progresiva, concéntrica con la fuente de origen de la difusión, y en concordancia con la dirección de vientos predominantes en la zona, y afectando también en ello, a **los animales domésticos** residentes en la zona (como, por ejemplo, son los llamados “mascotas” -perros, gatos, etc.- o los terneros de las ganaderías), y a los que, por supuesto, no cabe atribuirles ninguna suerte de afectación, en función de una **inexistente actividad laboral** de los mismos.

En cualquier caso, nuestra experiencia de trato con **los trabajadores del amianto**, nos viene a evidenciar, que **las placas pleurales**, en la práctica, son también **patologías, siempre**, habida cuenta de que saberse portador de las mismas, suscita en los afectados por ellas, un sentimiento subjetivo de **angustia** o de **daño moral**, por mucho que se les quiera convencer del carácter benigno de la afectación, y de su condición de mero síntoma inocuo, mero testigo de la susodicha exposición, ya sea laboral, o ya sea medioambiental.

Similarmente, otro tanto puede decirse, respecto de los **derrames pleurales**.

En menor grado, también pueden llegar a suscitarse parecidas suspicacias, en el caso de quienes presentan un número más o menos elevado de “**cuerpos asbestósicos**”, presentes en los esputos, o por la presentación de **crepitantes** basales pulmonares, o por la visualización de placas radiográficas con **opacidades**, o por un **dolor torácico persistente**, etc.

La generalización de la extensión de las placas pleurales no calcificadas, se define como engrosamiento pleural difuso, al que, con mayor motivo, cabe aplicarle las mismas reflexiones.

De una forma más difusa y atenuada, un persistente recelo acecha siempre, a cualquiera a quien profesionalmente **el amianto** se haya llegado a cruzar, en el transcurso de su respectiva vida laboral, como es el caso, por ejemplo, del autor del presente texto.

Basta con que un dolorcillo, asentado en tórax o abdomen, nos venga a importunar, para que ya tengamos “la mosca detrás de la oreja”, como se suele decir, y ello siempre a causa de esa presunta y temida “bomba de relojería” o “espada de Damocles”.

El mesotelioma también es producido por un mineral que no es ninguna clase de amianto, al tratarse de una zeolita fibrosa, pero su mención no es procedente, más que en relación con entornos geográficos en los que dicho mineral está presente, como es el caso, por ejemplo, de la Capadocia turca, o de ciertos terrenos de México. Para España, por tanto, no ha lugar a mención alguna, salvo para dejar debida constancia de esa distribución geográfica.

Existen, además de los **amiantos** y de las **zeolitas fibrosas**, los llamados “minerales asbestiformes” (unos doscientos), como la **sepiolita** o la **attapulguita**, y que, junto con la **vermiculita**, comparten la característica común a todas ellas, de que sus efectos nocivos son, afortunadamente, menos remarcados que en el caso de los diversos amiantosexistentes..

La asociación del **mesotelioma maligno** con la minería de la **taconita**, es decir, la abundancia de casos registrados, aunque real, no está esclarecida, puesto que la presencia de anfíboles en los yacimientos del susodicho mineral, no basta para justificar ninguna relación causal, etiológica.

Al parecer, surgen los casos de **mesotelioma maligno**, pero no los de las restantes **patologías asbesto-relacionadas**, al igual que ocurre también con la **zeolita fibrosa**.

Aproximadamente unos diez trabajos ya publicados, vienen a avalar tales conclusiones sobre la minería de **la taconita**, cualquiera que sea cualquier otro mineral presente en los mismos yacimientos.

A través de **las metástasis** y de **los síndromes paraneoplásicos**, los efectos de la afectación por los cánceres, incluidos **los asbesto-relacionados**, se diseminan a los más diversos emplazamientos corporales, contribuyendo así a la deslocalización de sus efectos directamente perceptibles, o susceptibles de ser revelados, a resultas de las maniobras de diagnóstico.

Finalmente, existe, además, la **fibrosis intersticial idiopática**, a la que, a medida que va transcurriendo el tiempo, se están decantando progresivamente evidencias, científicamente constatadas, que vienen a respaldar una probable relación causal con la exposición al **amianto**, y que, por lo tanto, no sería adecuado el calificativo de “idiopática”, que se le ha venido asignando.

El autor presenta seguidamente la oportuna bibliografía, que no pretende que sea exhaustiva, pero que a lo que sí aspira, es a que sea muy pertinente, conforme a los propósitos de señalamiento destacado, que el enfoque del presente artículo divulgativo aspira a imbuir en el amigo lector.

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