



Australian Government

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

Mesothelioma and the Australian Mesothelioma Registry (AMR)

The logo for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), consisting of the letters 'AIHW' in a bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'A' is blue, 'I' is green, 'H' is purple, and 'W' is red.

Stronger evidence,
better decisions,
improved health and welfare

What is Mesothelioma?

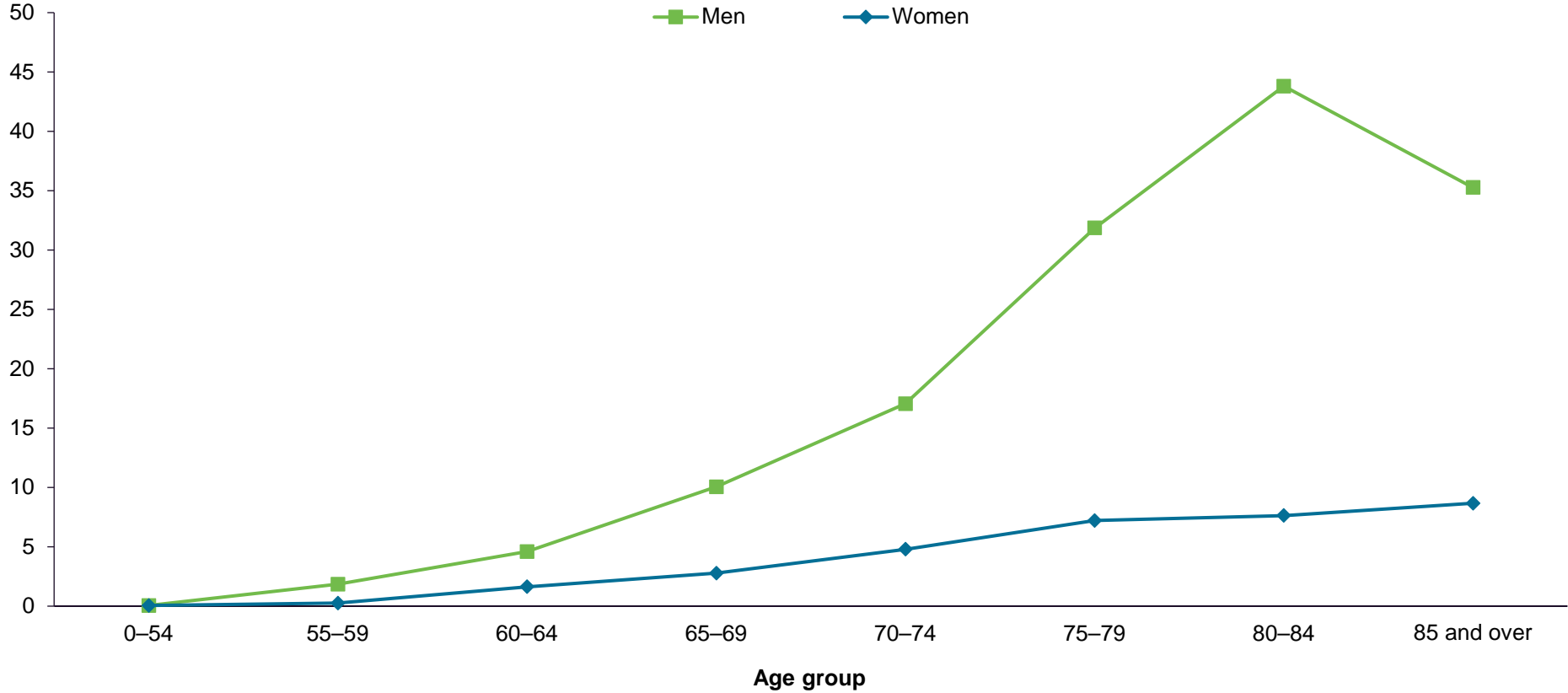
- Mesothelioma is a form of cancer in the mesothelium—the protective lining on the inside of body cavities and the outside of internal organs.
- The main cause of mesothelioma is exposure to asbestos but it takes 20 – 40 years on average.
- Australia has one of the highest measured incidence rates of mesothelioma in the world with between 700 and 800 people diagnosed with mesothelioma per year
- The median age at diagnosis is 77 years.
- Mesothelioma causes around 700 deaths per year.
- Due to its aggressive nature, mesothelioma has a very low 5-year survival rate (6.4% in 2013–2017 compared to 70% for all cancers combined).

About the Australian Mesothelioma Registry (AMR)

- The Australian Mesothelioma Registry (or AMR) is a national collection of all mesothelioma cases diagnosed since 1 July 2010 and is the most up-to-date source of national data on mesothelioma incidence (number of new cases) in Australia.
- Mesothelioma case notifications are fast-tracked to the AMR from state and territory cancer registries.
- Most notifications are still received in the year after diagnosis because of the time it takes to make a definitive diagnosis, and the time between diagnosis and notification to cancer registries and the AMR.
- The AMR collects data on incidence, mortality and potential asbestos exposure (for consenting patients).
- Information on potential occupational and environmental asbestos exposure is collected from consenting mesothelioma patients through a postal questionnaire and telephone interview.

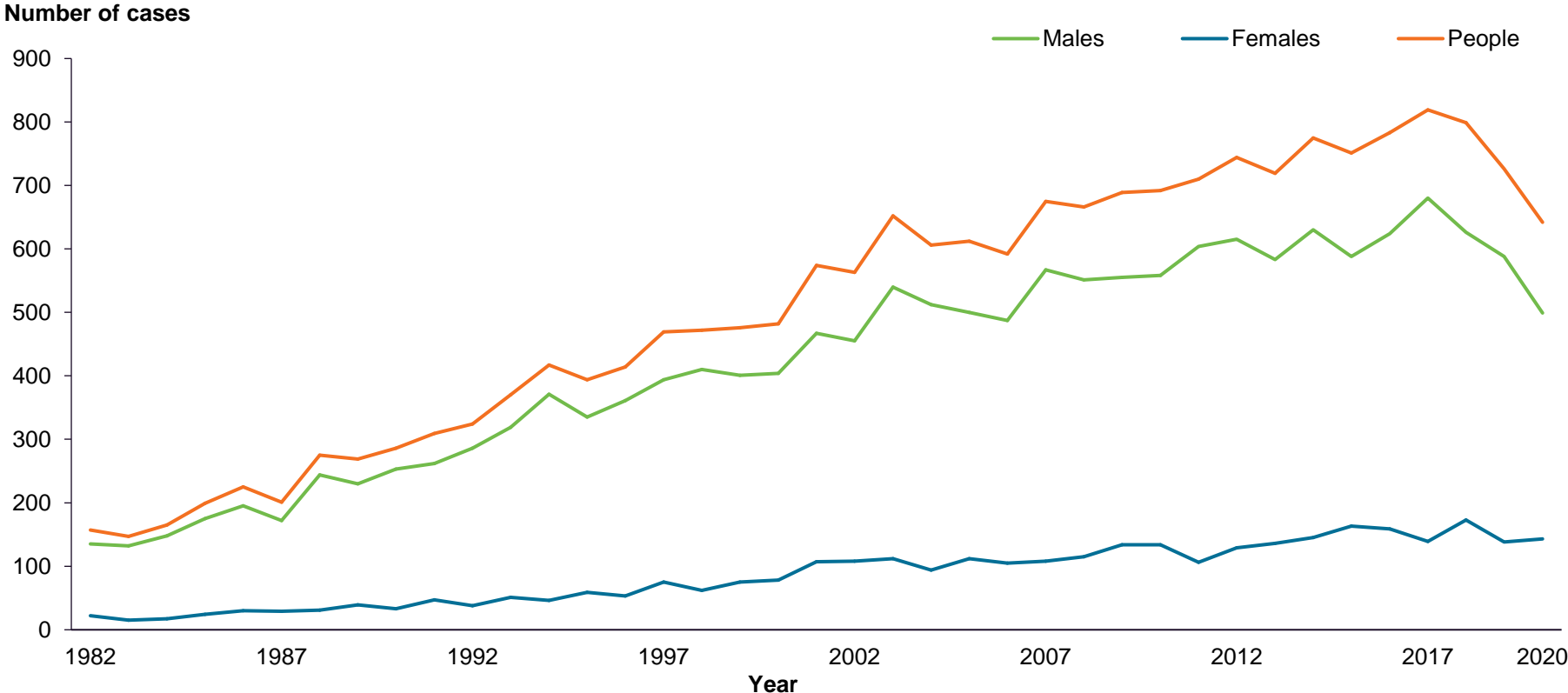
Mesothelioma incidence rate by age and sex in 2020

Rate (per 100,000 population)



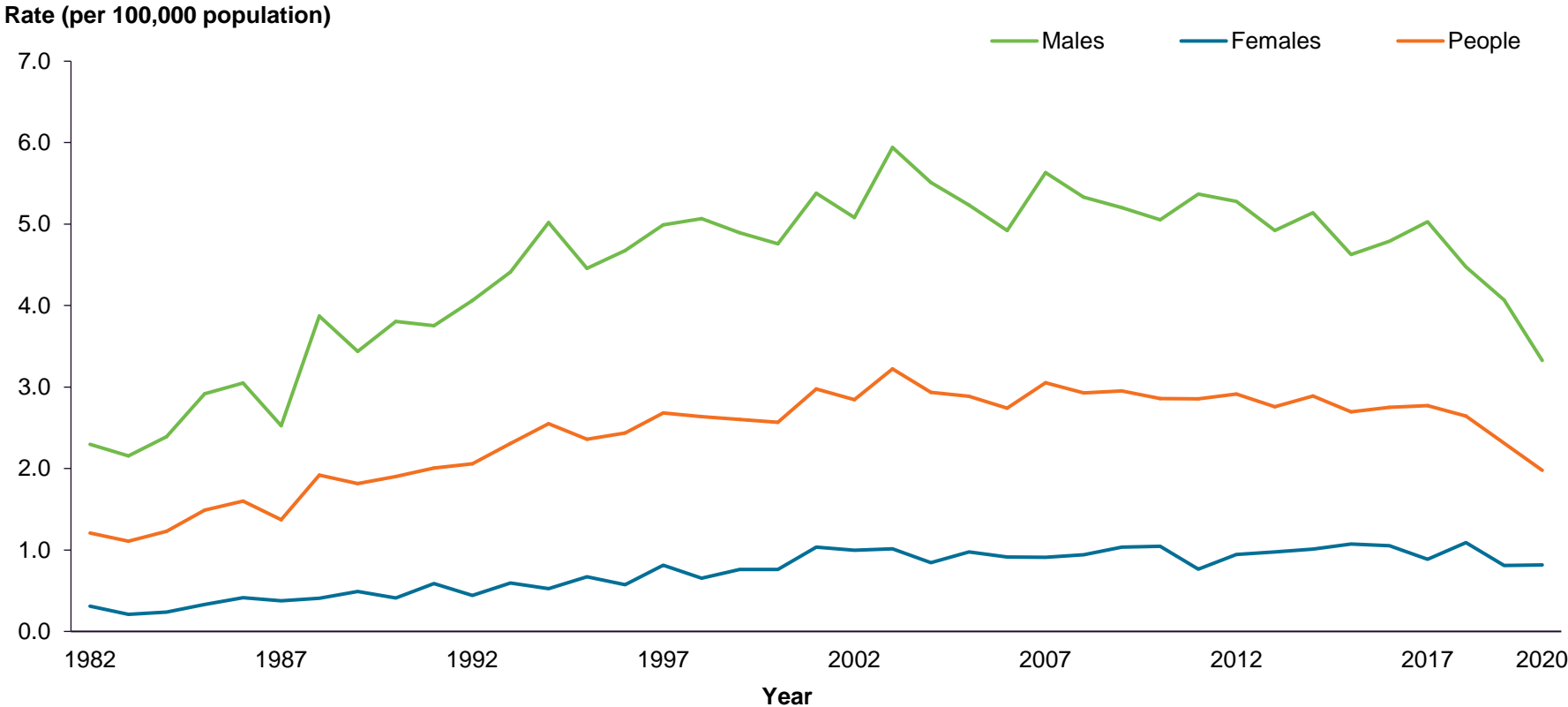
Number of new mesothelioma cases over time

Number of people diagnosed with mesothelioma, by year and sex, 1982 to 2020



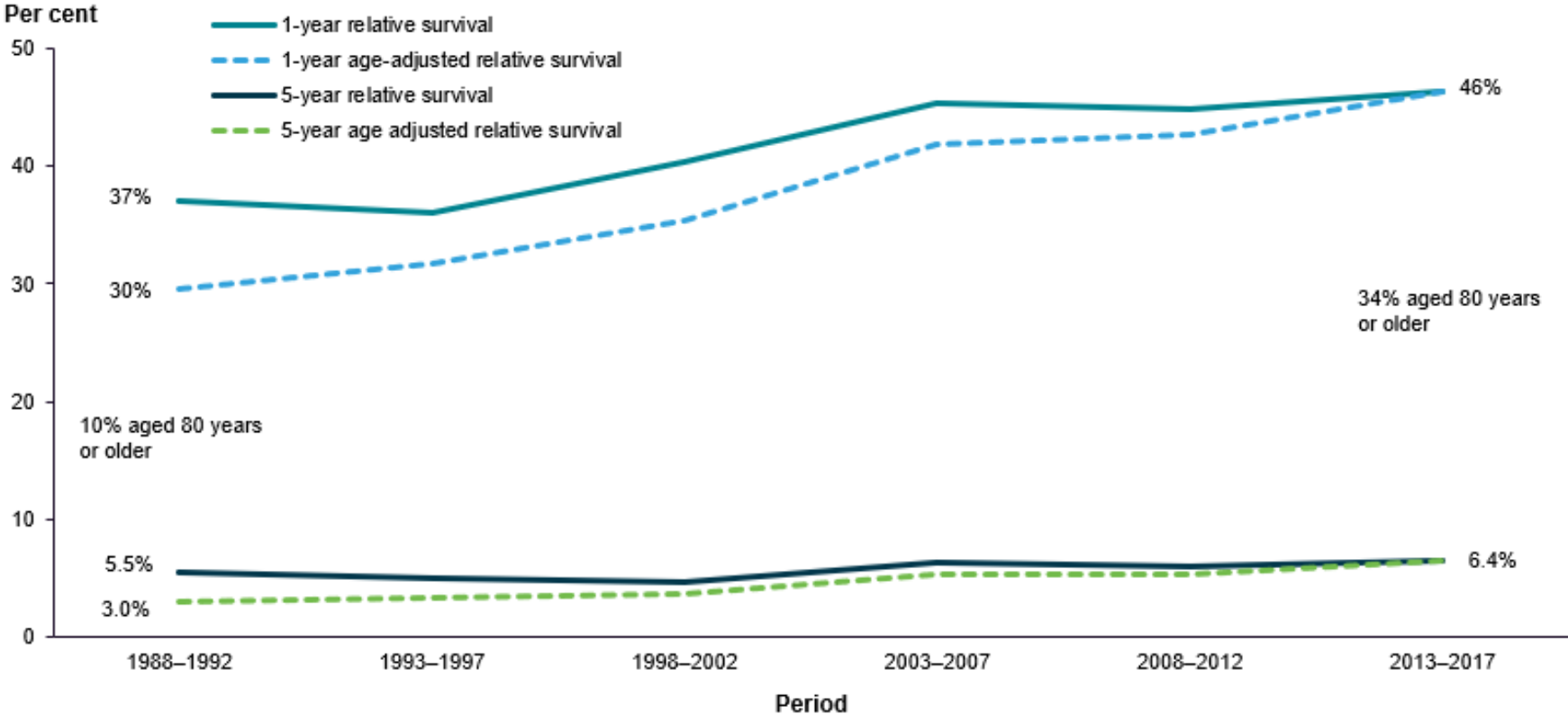
Mesothelioma rates over time

Age-standardised rate (per 100,000 population) of people diagnosed with mesothelioma, by year and sex, 1982–2020



Mesothelioma survival over time

1-year and 5-year relative survival of people diagnosed with mesothelioma, 1988–1992 to 2013–2017



Asbestos exposure

- Mesothelioma can be associated with occupational and non-occupational exposure to asbestos.
- More than 9 in 10 (94% or 1,028) people who had been diagnosed with mesothelioma and participated in the asbestos exposure survey between 2010 and 2020 were assessed as having possible or probable exposure to asbestos.
- Of these 1,028 people:
 - 12% were assessed as having only occupational asbestos exposure
 - 36% were assessed as having only non-occupational asbestos exposure
 - 52% were assessed as having both occupational and non-occupational asbestos exposure

Asbestos exposure (cont.)

- For the 1,028 participants assessed as having possible or probable asbestos exposure:
 - 78% of men provided information indicating occupational exposure
 - 99% of women provided information indicating non-occupational exposure
- Based on the interview data, 81% of participants who received the 'Trades' module, 39% of those who received the 'Land transport' module, and 73% of those who received the 'Water transport' module, were assessed as having had 'probable' exposure to asbestos for jobs in those categories.
- The most common circumstances of possible or probable non-occupational asbestos exposure were:
 - Home renovation-related activities
 - Car maintenance

Where to find more information

- Further information about the AMR is available at www.mesothelioma-australia.com/home.
- The full report 'Mesothelioma in Australia 2020' and previous annual reports are available at www.mesotheliomaaustralia.com/publications-and-data/publications.

Acknowledgements

The AMR Expert Advisory Group members who provide valuable advice: Professor Tim Driscoll (Chair), Associate Professor Fraser Brims, Ms Elizabeth Chalker, Dr Claire Cooke Yarborough, Associate Professor Sonja Klebe, Ms Justine Ross, Mr Trevor Torrens and Professor Karen Walker-Bone.

The AIHW acknowledges the data and assistance provided by all state and territory cancer registries, and thanks staff at the Monash Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health for undertaking and reporting on the asbestos exposure component of the AMR, and staff at the Social Research Centre for their work interviewing people diagnosed with mesothelioma.

The Australian Mesothelioma Registry is funded by Safe Work Australia.



Questions?