Background. Turkey Asbestos Control Strategic Plan was developed by Turkish Mesothelioma Working Group and implemented in Nov 3, 2012 by the support of the Turkish Ministry of Health in order to determine the prevalence of environmental asbestos exposure in rural areas of Turkey.

Methods. In the years 2008-2012, all patients with an ICD code of C45 in the hospitals were identified and evaluated. The places of birth of patients were recorded. An education program was developed and a questionnaire about asbestos exposure was filled out by the major in villages or small towns. Thereafter, trained technicians went to these villages/towns and got soil samples for mineral analysis. The villages/towns where the soil sample showed asbestos fibers were classified as villages with asbestos exposure. The mesothelioma patients who had not born or lived in a village were evaluated in terms of occupational asbestos exposure.

Results. There were a total of 6,426 patients with C45 ICD code recorded during 2008-2012. A total of 1,571 villages/towns in 63 cities were identified. According to the results of education program and questionnaire, there were 58 cities and 1,062 villages/towns with a high risk of asbestos exposure. A total of 2,447 soil samples were taken from 1,018 villages/towns. Mineralogical analysis of these samples revealed chrysolite, tremolite or asbestos in a mixed form in 965 samples from 393 villages/towns in 42 cities.

Conclusions. Asbestos exposure in rural parts of Turkey is still an important problem. However, based on these findings a strategic plan is being implemented to completely eliminate the problem.