

Health Hazards of Industrial Workers: Preventive Measures

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Abstract

Workers in every occupation face a multitude of hazards in the work place - occupational health and. Safety addresses the broad range of workplace hazards from accident prevention to the more insidious hazards, including toxic fumes, dust, noise, heat, stress, etc. Preventing work-related diseases and accidents must be the goal of occupational health and safety programs. The occupational health service is a link in the work organization. Human life is high in the hierarchy of values for the health professions. Health is a major determinant of the quality of life. Societal values have greater importance in the world of labor, with its complex informal and formal social structures. The cultural values of both workers and the community at large have to be considered. Present-day technology is a valuable asset if its limitations are understood. Computers and their software already provide thoroughly tested systems of data recording, processing, retrieval, and analysis, obviating the need for other records and occupational health services. The occupational illness burden is growing at an increasing rate. The profile of occupational illness has also been modified over a period due to modernization, liberalization, and globalization. Trained human resources in the field of occupational health and safety are far below the requirement. Hence, there is an urgent need for framing suitable policy, developing newer strategies, and developing our knowledge about occupational health and safety measures. Traditional training in occupational health needs to be supplemented with modern techniques.

Keywords: Liberalization, Globalization, Health, Safety and Services

Introduction

Workers in every occupation are faced with a multitude of hazards in the work place. Occupational health and. Safety addresses the broad range of workplace hazards from accident prevention to the more insidious hazards, including toxic fumes, dust, noise, heat, stress, etc. Preventing work-related diseases and accidents must be the goal of occupational health and safety programs. The occupational health service is a link in the work organization. Human life is high in the hierarchy of values for the health professions. Health is a major determinant of the quality of life. Societal values have greater importance in the world of labor, with its complex informal and formal social structures. The cultural values of both workers and the community at large have to be considered. Present-day technology is a valuable asset if its limitations are understood. Computers and their software already provide thoroughly tested systems of data recording, processing, retrieval, and analysis, obviating the need for other records and occupational health services. (Mihir Kumar Goswami and Nibedita Devi, 2000)

Categories of Occupational Hazards

Ronald Blake has classified occupational hazards into the following three categories:

- Biological Hazards
- Environmental hazards or Physical hazards
- Psychological hazards

Biological Hazards are manifested by bacteria, fungi, viruses, insects, dietary deficiencies, drinking, allergy, brain fever imbalances, tetanus, stress and strain, infectious waste, and infestations.

Environmental Hazards or Physical Hazards include noise pollution, vibration and stocks, unsatisfactory lighting, radiation, extreme temperature, illumination, heat, ventilation, air, and water pollution. These hazards cause redness of eyes, genetic disorders, cancer, sterility, hearing, loss nerve injury, etc. to Workers.

Psychological Hazards Industrial/Job stress caused by various stressors, such as and role demands, organizational leadership, lack of group co-operation, inter-group and inter-personal conflicts, life, and career changes, etc. emotional disturbances, which in turn lead to fatigue and exhaustion. All these affect the health of employees.

Preventive Measures

Preventive measures are based on the philosophy that prevention is better than cure, which includes,

- Pre-employment medical examination
- Periodic post-employment medical examination
- Removal of hazardous conditions to the extent possible
- Surveillance of special classes of workers such as women workers and child laborers exposed to health hazards
- Emergency treatment in case of accidents
- Health and hygiene education for the workers
- Training in first-aid to workers
- Proper factory lay-out and illumination
- Proper effluent disposal treatment plants
- Proper re-design of a job to remove monetary and fatigue
- Proper scheduling of the work with adequate rest

Conclusion

The occupational illness burden is growing at an increasing rate. The profile of occupational illness has also modified over some time due to modernization, liberalization, and globalization. Trained human resources in the field of occupational health and safety are far below the requirement. Hence, there is an urgent need for framing suitable policy, developing newer strategies, and developing our knowledge about occupational health and safety measures. Traditional training in occupational health needs to be supplemented with modern techniques.

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