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TACKLING OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND PREVENTION

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Aim of special session To increase capacities to find and use practical solutions for early diagnosis and prevention of occupational diseases in day-to-day activity.

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BUILDING PREVENTION-ORIENTED TEAM SUPPORT FOR GOOD OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PRACTICES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Introduction In globalising economies, occupational health teams increasingly focus on locally adjusted support functions known as basic occupational health services. Networked collaboration in Asian countries indicate the importance of facilitating primary prevention of work-related risks through participatory steps leading to multifaceted workplace environment improvements. It is useful to know practical ways for developing countries to facilitate implementation of these improvements through locally adjusted risk management procedures.

Methods Recent experiences of occupational health teams within our Asian network for promoting participatory workplace improvement programs are examined. The reviewed programs aim at improving workplace environment in small enterprises, construction sites, agriculture and health care work. To know commonly effective procedures, we focus on solution-oriented procedures of addressing multifaceted risks usually identified in developing countries.

Results In the reviewed participatory programs, concrete results are usually obtained when the programs emphasise feasible low-cost improvements reflecting broad-ranging local good practices. This good-practice approach is effective when occupational health support teams focus on multifaceted improvements having real impacts on primary prevention of work-related risks. Typically, these improvements have a broad scope covering work methods, physical environment and team-work arrangements. As means of facilitating the planning of risk-reducing improvements, broadly compiled good practices

and 'action checklists' listing corresponding low-cost improvements have proven useful. Intervention studies on applying these participatory methods indicate actual reduction of multiple risks. The simplified solution-oriented procedures relying on group work of workers about feasible actions thus represent the core function of occupational health teams in facilitating primary prevention of work-related health risks.

Conclusions The solution-oriented support of occupational health teams directly aimed at locally feasible preventive measures is found essential, rather than detailed analysis of risk factors. Simplified participatory procedures are confirmed useful in facilitating primary prevention of multifaceted health hazards at workplaces in developing countries.

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RECOGNITION, SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

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Introduction There is a huge global need for good education, training and information on Occupational Safety and Health. Especially for tracing and prevention of occupational diseases. Internet can accelerate the process and coverage of education and training. In this session experiences in international projects will be shared.

Methods A range of activities in this field will be presented, especially from LDOH (www.ldoh.net):

- Development of online, blended and other materials for information and education, training courses on recognition, health surveillance, diagnosis, therapy and prevention of work-related diseases.
- Good practices like international summer school activities and Question and Answer facilities.
- New efforts involving primary or community health care as the foundation for basic occupational health care: Turkey, Thailand, Brazil, Vietnam, Iran, parts in China, new efforts in India, Bangladesh, South Africa.

Results and discussion

- Education and training in OHS is not a standalone activity. It should be programmatic and on many different levels, involving everyone who can be involved: vocational schools, using participatory approaches empowering communities and even including churches and private companies.
- Importance of OSH infrastructure (sector-wise, regional or national programs; involvement of Labour Inspection and Social Security Organisations), multidisciplinary collaboration and outreach-activities towards the entire global working population: all formal and informal workers with special attention for vulnerable groups (women, children, migrants, elderly): Universal Health Coverage (WHO).
- A more active role of International bodies?