

NEWSLETTER

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Dear Colleagues

This is a Conference year - ICOH 2012 took place recently and IOHA 2012 will happen in September (I hope many of you will be able to attend !).

I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Jorma Rantanen, former ICOH President, former Director General of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, for receiving at ICOH 2012 the first ICOH Life Achievement Award in recognition of "his outstanding contribution to research impact on prevention and policies in the field of Occupational Safety and Health and of his remarkable and excellent support to ICOH revitalization and impact at international level". I had the honour to work with Jorma on many occasions because he has collaborated significantly with WHO, for example, he had a leading role in the preparation of the important 1995 WHO document "Global strategy on occupational health for all: The way to health at work", which paved the way to a number of subsequent key actions.

It was gratifying to see that, at the ICOH Congress, key points such as "proactive risk management, innovative solution-based approaches" and "building bridges between research and practice" were emphasized. It is also encouraging that the "Cancun Charter on Occupational Health for All", signed in Cancun, focuses on the priority of occupational health in political agendas. This is a critical issue, if we are to have effective protection of workers' health.

Many international and national political agendas do not adequately address occupational health, as a fundamental aspect of economic, social and sustainable development. The ILO project "Improving safety and health at work through a Decent Work agenda" was created to respond to this omission, as it aims at "incorporating occupational safety and health at the highest level in the national political agenda, integrating it into national development policies, and translating the

occupational safety and health national programmes into action at the workplace level."

Even in health policies the required balance in addressing all health determinants is seldom achieved, and the most likely to be overlooked are "work and the workplace". Occupational diseases continue to be one of the silent epidemics. In my state in Brazil, just now, in 4 days we had five deaths at work due to lack of safety, which was tragic. However, fatal occupational accidents are usually visible and often make their way into newspapers and TV headlines, and this hopefully contributes to a gradual improvement in their prevention. On the other hand, occupational diseases do not usually come to attention so promptly (if at all !) and I wonder how many died or became sentenced to death due to an uncontrolled occupational exposure, in these four days, without a connection being made and publicized !

That is why it is so vital that we continue our efforts in bringing to light the importance of our profession, which is so underestimated in many places. I have visited enterprises with excellent safety programmes and yet, when it came to occupational hygiene, the mistakes were many – even some expensive control measures were badly designed, hence inefficient. This is a result of the shortage or even the inexistence of adequately trained and competent occupational hygienists.

I would like to comment on another issue that came to mind when reading one of the contributions from readers in this edition, on Indium and compounds, which demonstrates the importance given by the Japanese government to the toxicity of an economically very important chemical, hence to the enforcement of strict preventive measures in its use. Concerned industry representatives, when meeting with occupational health professionals and government officials, agreed to implement strict controls, but made a request that such scientific results be disseminated internationally to encourage other governments to also require similar measures.

This has to do with a present-day issue that I believe is an unfortunate aspect of globalization, and which is due to discrepancies in the enforcement of appropriate health and safety, as well as working conditions and social security requirements, in different countries. Concerning our field, it happens that products manufactured with no respect for the health of workers and the environment compete with others manufactured in places where appreciable funds are spent to protect them. This unfair situation has caused difficulties particularly, but not exclusively, for small enterprises. And it would be disastrous if, in order to commercially compete, countries would start lowering their occupational health and safety standards.

It is my belief that there should be an improvement in international trade agreements and rules in the sense of

introducing stronger H&S and environmental protection requirements (in the line of EU REACH for chemicals), among other social aspects.

It is interesting to remember that when the ILO first started to observe the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, on 28 April 2003, the selected theme was "Safety and Health Culture in a Globalized World". In fact, let's remember to celebrate this day this year, with the timely theme "Promoting safety and health in a green economy".

As we witness what is going on in our field, we realize that progress is not what it should be and this tends to be discouraging. Very often, the professionals who wish to practice occupational health, correctly and ethically, have to fight every inch of their way as the obstacles are many and sometimes, insurmountable. I hereby repeat what I said in a

lecture 10 years ago: when we think about victory, let's think in the sense of a definition that goes "victory is the art of persevering when others decide to stop trying". So, no matter how difficult the challenge, let's keep trying!

Thank you for your valuable contributions that make this Newsletter possible.

I wish you all a lot of success and fulfillment in your work.

Best greetings

Berenice Goelzer

berenice@goelzer.net

NEWS from IOHA

WHO Collaborating Centres Planning Meeting and ICOH 30th Congress – Cancun, Mexico, 14-23 March 2012

Sent by Noel Tresider, IOHA President 2011-2012 E-mail: ntreside@bigpond.net.au

In March, I had the pleasure of going to Cancun Mexico to attend the WHO Collaborating Centres Planning Meeting, and then the International Commission on Occupational Health 30th Congress.

The WHO CC Planning Meeting was to develop the WHO Workplan for the next 5 year (2012-2017) and IOHA (as a NGO with WHO), is an active participant through our representative Dave Zalk. There were a number of key messages from the planning meeting - incorporating workers' health into global policies and sectoral strategies for green economy and green jobs.

IOHA has submitted a number of projects to contribute to the WHO Workplan on occupational health ranging from tool kits, a new project on awareness of hearing loss in young people, and awareness and training material on Asbestos and Silica which are part of the OHlearning.com collection. It was a great opportunity to develop new contacts in Latin America and other developing regions, and I look forward to IOHA continuing these relationships.

The ICOH 30th Congress was a grand conference with some 1,600 delegates from over 65 countries.

The Congress opened with the trooping of the Mexican flag by the Colour Troop in their splendid uniforms marching to a military band. At the opening ceremony I had the pleasure of addressing the delegates on behalf of IOHA expressing our desire to continue our close working relationship with ICOH, WHO and ILO. The opening ceremony concluded with a wonderful spirited display of Mexican and Mayan folk dancing.

The topics were wide ranging with many thought provoking plenary presentations – Occupational Health Aspects of Climate Change (Dr. Tord Kjellstrom) , International Approaches to Asbestos (Prof Ken Takahashi from Japan), The changing nature of work in the 21st century (by Dr John Howard NIOHS Director) to name a few

This was also an opportunity to promote OHlearning.com, and I made a presentation outlining the efforts achieved thus far by the Occupational Hygiene Training Association, and the future plans for further development – there was much interest in the OHlearning.com training material particularly from the developing countries and academic institutions in Latin America.

The next ICOH Congress will be held in Seoul Korea in 2015.

It was indeed a wonderful and productive visit to Mexico.



ICOH Congress - Noel with the delegation from Columbia and PAHO

Update on the 9th IOHA International Scientific Conference

Sent by Rajesh Jackson, MIHA E-mail: Rajesh.Jackson@erm.com



The Malaysian Industrial Hygiene Association (MIHA) is proud to host the 9th IOHA International Scientific Conference in Kuala Lumpur from 16th – 20th September 2012. With the theme “Growing the Seeds of Occupational Hygiene”, the conference aspires to further promote industrial hygiene as a new field that begins to be recognized and in demand within the region.

The Professional Development Courses (PDCs) will take place on 16-17 September 2012, and the Scientific and Technical Presentations, during the Conference. During this time there will be the opportunity for colleagues to discuss a number of IH/OH and HSE matters.

The **Programme** will include:

- Three Plenary Sessions with 9 plenary speakers identified (ILO, WHO, IOHA, ICOH, NIOSH-US, McMaster University (Canada, DOSH)
- Twenty-eight Podium Sessions (4 Concurrent, 112 papers) with more than 20 IH & HSE topics
- Poster sessions with 80 papers will be showcased, giving opportunities for delegates to maximize their learning and investment.
- Nine “1-full day” and one “1/2 day” Professional Development Courses (PDCs).

PDCs: Register early for PDCs to secure your seats! Direct link for details on available PDCs: http://www.ioha2012.net/?page_id=950

Participants will earn certification points by attending this conference. Relevant points applicable to relevant IOHA member countries will be updated on our website.

Registration: We are now open for registration at www.ioha2012.net.

IOHA 2012 Online Photography Contest

In conjunction with Conference, the Malaysian Industrial Hygiene Association (MIHA) is organizing the IOHA 2012 Online Photography Contest with the aim of increasing the awareness of the general public on areas of industrial hygiene, occupational health, safety and environment.

This contest will run from 15 April to 31 July 2012. It is open to everybody worldwide from the ages of 18 years and above.

We are looking for the most outstanding photos and creative captions following the theme of the conference, which is “**Growing the Seeds of Occupational Hygiene**”.

IOHA 2012 Technical Tours

There will be the possibility for visits, namely to an Oil Refinery in Melaka Town and a Palm Oil Plantation Research & Development (R&D) Center.

Further details on all aspects of the Conference are presented at: www.ioha2012.net

NEWS from Member Organisations

From Brazil - ABHO

IV Pan-American Congress on Occupational Hygiene



The Brazilian Association of Occupational Hygienists (ABHO) will be responsible for the organization of the IV Pan-

American Congress on Occupational Hygiene, to be held from 19 to 23 August 2012 in São Paulo, Brazil, in association with:

- Asociación Mexicana de Higiene Industrial (AMHI)

- Asociación Chilena de Higiene Industrial y Salud Ocupacional (ACHISO)
- Asociación Venezolana de Higienistas Ocupacionales (AVHO)
- Asociación Colombiana de Higiene Ocupacional (ACHO).

It is hoped to also have the participation of the Argentinean and Peruvian associations.

The theme of the event will be "Occupational Hygiene building an Occupational Health Culture in Latin America", and the aim will be to enhance the recognition of the importance of Occupational Hygiene in this region, as well as the integration of professionals from the different Latin American countries around this concept.

At the same time, ABHO will hold its "XIX Brazilian Annual Meeting of Occupational Hygienists" and offer Professional Development Courses.

Courses will take place on 19-20 August 2012, at the meeting rooms of the Novotel Jaraguá SP Conventions, São Paulo.

The opening Session of the IV Pan-American Congress will take place on 20 August 2012.

Lectures and presentations, as well as the exhibit of instrumentation, equipment and services, will take place at the Convention Centre of Hotel Century Paulista, São Paulo, on 21-23 August 2012. There will be the traditional fraternization lunches for the participants.

The themes for the main lectures will be the following:

- Creating culture through education and training in Occupational Hygiene - milestones for a Latin American vision
- Disseminating knowledge on good Occupational Hygiene practices
- Comparative Occupational Hygiene Legislation in Latin America
- Occupational Hygiene in different occupational branches such as mining, gas, chemical and petrochemical industry, and small enterprises.

Furthermore, there will be presentation of papers on different topics by the participants.

International lecturers and national authorities in the field of OH&S will participate in this important event.

Further details can be obtained through ABHO: Website: www.abho.org.br and E-Mail: secretaria@abho.com.br

From Japan

JAWE-JOHA Joint Conference and Exhibition on Occupational Hygiene and Working Environment Measurement 2012, Utsunomiya

Sent by Shigeru Asuka, Director General, JAWE, E-mail: sasuka@jawe.or.jp
Norihiko Kohyama, E-mail: kohyama@toyo.jp
and Masayoshi Karasawa, Special Adviser, JAWE, E-mail: m19419k@yahoo.co.jp



The Japan Association for Working Environment Measurement (JAWE), whose Chairperson is Mr. Takayoshi Meiga, Managing Director, Nippon Steel Corporation, and the Japan Occupational Hygiene Association (JOHA), whose chairperson is Dr. Norihiko Kohyama, Visiting Professor, University of Toyo, held their 13th "Joint Conference and Exhibition on Occupational Hygiene and Working Environment Measurement 2012" from 16 to 18 November 2012, in Utsunomiya, capital city of Tochigi prefecture, located about 100km north from Tokyo.

This event provided about 300 participants, including researchers, technical experts in working environment control, 21 manufacturers/dealers of measuring equipment and other interested people, who had a good opportunity to discuss and exchange views on their daily technical issues.

There were altogether 64 scientific presentations and case studies by researchers and experts, almost the same number as last year. Among them, 24 presentations were on chemical analysis and 19 were on working environment improvement. The breakdown of them was analytical technology on mineral dusts (8), metals (5), organic solvents (3), specified hazardous chemicals (3) and measuring methods for asbestos (7), nano-particles (5) and formaldehyde (4).

There were 12 presentations by manufacturers on their commercially available models of state-of-the-art measuring equipment, as well as the exhibition of the equipment, including from other manufacturers/dealers who did not join the presentations.



This year's joint conference and exhibition was highlighted by the special session on risk control of Indium Tin Oxide (ITO), the essential material in manufacture of liquid crystal display for TVs, PCs and mobile phones, etc. Japan accounts for about 80 percent of ITO annual production in the world.

The session was composed of four presentations namely on: 1) "administrative control measures" by a government official concerned, 2) "health impairment caused by ITO" by a medical

doctor, 3)“measurement method” by a measurement expert and 4)“respiratory protective equipment to be used in ITO handling” by an university professor.

Health problems caused by ITO constitute a hot issue in Japan now, because experimental toxicology studies with respect to ITO both concerning carcinogenicity and chronic toxicity by inhalation of ITO dust performed at the Japan Bioassay Research Centre, which is a GLP referent facility, established by the government, revealed the potential carcinogenic risk to workers handling them.

The other special session was on “asbestos in Asian countries” where reports revealed that chrysotile is still widely used in countries of this region for industrial purposes and, therefore, control measures should be taken in the concerned workplaces.

The next joint conference and exhibition will be held in November 2013 in Fukuoka City, located in Kyushu Island.

JAWE-sponsored National symposium on working environment control and risk control of hazardous chemicals 2012, Sendai

JAWE launched the annual National symposium in 2010 under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and other concerned associations and industries. The first and the second symposium were held in Tokyo in 2010 and 2011, respectively. However, JAWE, in consultation with the Ministry, decided to hold the third symposium in Sendai that was hardly hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent devastating Tsunami eight months before, in the hope to encourage local people to overcome the resulting difficulties.

About 100 people, mostly from the Eastern half of Japan, participated in the one-day symposium, which consisted of one special lecture, two case studies and one panel discussion.

Dr. Haruhiko Sakurai, professor emeritus of Keio University and the leading expert on risk control of chemicals in Japan, delivered a special lecture on “the theory and practice of chemicals’ risk assessment”.



Case studies in workplaces of the chemical manufacturing industry and electrical appliances industry were presented by Dr. Seitaroh Dohi, Chief Occupational Physician of Mitsui Chemicals Co., Ltd. and Mr. Michizane Ono, senior staff of Mitsubishi Electric Co., Ltd., respectively

The Panel discussion was chaired by Mr. Yasumi Shiozaki, vice-president of JAWE and managing director of Sumitomo Chemicals Co. Ltd., on the topic of “How to practice risk-based control in workplaces”. The panelists were Dr. Dohi, Mr. Ono and three other participants including one from the government.

From the United Kingdom

BOHS welcomes publication of Löfstedt review Sent by Alex Bianchi, BOHS President, 2011–2012

E-mail: president@bohs.org



The British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) welcomes the publication of the Löfstedt review of health and safety legislation. “It is a balanced, evidence-based report which focuses on the issues which need to be addressed”, states Steve Perkins, BOHS Chief Executive.

The headline conclusion of the review - that in general, the problem lies less with the regulations themselves and more with the way they are interpreted and applied - chimes with BOHS’s expressed view that such inappropriate application of health and safety regulations is principally of those linked to public safety and individual behaviour rather than those aimed at reducing workplace exposures to health hazards.

Moreover, the review explicitly acknowledges the much greater burden on business and society from occupational ill-health as opposed to accidents, citing as an example the estimated 8,000 cancer deaths in Britain each year that are attributable to past

workplace exposures to carcinogens. “The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) has had a major impact in reducing occupational accidents, but more attention - through communication, training and enforcement - is needed to reduce the burden of chronic ill health arising from exposure risks in the work environment, such as those from chemicals or physical agents such as noise”, confirms Perkins. “The recommendations in the Löfstedt review will, at last, begin to refocus attention where it is needed - on the serious challenges in stemming the levels of exposure related death and disability in the UK.”

In addition, BOHS is particularly pleased at the recognition of the need to stimulate a wider debate about risk in society and how it should be regulated, and is supportive of the proposal to convene an expert group, under the Government’s Chief Scientific Adviser, to consider how to engage society in a discussion.

X2012: 7th International Conference on the Science of Exposure Assessment, 2-5 July 2012

Sent by Martie van Tongeren (Organising Committee Chair)

E-mail: Martie.VanTongeren@iom-world.org

and Frank de Vocht (Scientific Committee Chair)

E-mail: Frank.DeVocht@manchester.ac.uk



The British Occupational Hygiene Society is hosting an international scientific conference on the science of exposure assessment in Edinburgh on 2 – 5 July 2012 (X2012).

Dr John Howard (Director of NIOSH) has kindly agreed to provide the opening address and the following keynote lectures will be given by:

Dr Roel Vermeulen (IRAS, University of Utrecht, NL): The Exposome; Decoding the environment.

Dr Dhimiter Bello (University of Massachusetts Lowell, US): Beyond emissions: Linking exposures to engineered nanomaterials with human health

Prof Richard Wakeford (University of Manchester, UK): Exposure assessment following catastrophic events - the example of Fukushima

Dr Erik Tielemans (TNO, NL): Advancements in occupational exposure modelling

Dr Melissa Friesen (NCI, US): Inside the black box: Advances in exposure assessment for population-based studies



- Exposure assessment methodology following disasters
- Exposure assessment studies for engineered nanomaterials
- Exposure assessment studies for chemical agents
- Exposure assessment studies for biological agents
- Exposure assessment studies for physical agents
- Use of sensor technology in exposure assessment
- Recent advances in exposure assessment methodology for general population-based epidemiological studies
- Recent advances in exposure modelling, including for REACH
- Biological monitoring and physiologically-based pharmacokinetic (PBPK) modelling
- Statistical methods for exposure assessment
- Dermal and ingestion exposure
- Methodology for aggregate exposure assessment
- Methodology for estimating exposure to indoor air contaminants
- Exposure assessment for health impact assessment studies
- Pesticide exposure
- Exposure assessment using geospatial information systems

In addition, poster sessions will complement the programme.

All in all, X2012 promises to be a very interesting and stimulating programme for anyone who is interested in the science of exposure assessment. In addition, X2012 will provide ample opportunities to network and meet with colleagues to discuss the challenges and current and future requirements for exposure assessment.

We have received a large number of high quality abstracts from all over the world, not only UK, other European countries, US and Canada, but Asian countries are also very well represented. At the time of writing, the final programme is now available on the conference website (www.x2012.org/).

We look forward to welcoming you to Edinburgh in 2-5 July, 2012.

www.x2012.org

The programme promises to be of very high quality, covering a wide variety of topics. Session topics include:

The Quintessence of Dust

Sent by John W Cherrie E-mail: john.cherrie@iom-world.org
Lang Tran E-mail: lang.tran@iom-world.org



Inhaled Particles XI

23 - 25 September 2013 | Nottingham

The eleventh international Inhaled Particles Symposium (IPXI) will be held in Nottingham between the 23 and 25 of September, 2013. This series of conferences has been organized periodically over the last fifty-two years and the latest meeting promises to provide a fantastic opportunity for discussions about the latest scientific research on the hazards and risks from aerosols.

In 1943 Thomas Bedford, the first president of BOHS, and others published a comprehensive report of conditions in the Welsh coalmines [1]. They used very crude hand pumps to measure the gravimetric concentration of dust in the mines. The colliery mean values during ripping of coal ranged from 105 to 424 mg/m³ and in the coal handling work from 84 to 675 mg/m³. At this time there was a great risk of pneumoconiosis and increased mortality from non-malignant respiratory and heart disease. The problem was considerably worse in South Wales but nobody really understood the underlying reason. However, it was clear that only through careful research were the issues going to be understood.

Ten years later, Thomas Bedford and the thirty-four others founded the Society, with one of their key objectives to hold at least one conference each year. In 1957, Henry Walton put forward the idea of a specialized international conference on the inhalation and retention of particles and vapours. Part of his original rationale for this meeting was to talk about the progress that had been made in measuring respirable coal dust and quantifying the risk from exposure. The proposal was widely supported and the first Symposium was held in Oxford in 1960. There were 251 delegates from 20 countries; 38 papers were presented. It was a great success, although very few papers were presented on vapours and this was later dropped from later meetings. Importantly the proceedings were published as peer-reviewed articles and this tradition has enhanced the standing of the meeting and of the BOHS. Further

Symposia were held about every five or so years, thereafter: in Cambridge (four times), Edinburgh (twice), Brighton, Cardiff and Sheffield. The history for the Symposium is ably summed up by Walton [2] and Jim Vincent [3].

While research into industrial dusts such as coal and asbestos will undoubtedly continue to be represented at IPXI, it is expected that there will be a very wide range of investigations described, including studies of ambient air pollution, environmental cigarette smoke, biomass fuel burning, volcanic ash, bioaerosols, pharmaceutical aerosols and engineered nanoparticles. The future conferences will include toxicology studies, epidemiological investigations, clinical investigations along with exposure measurement and modeling. We are particularly interested in receiving results from studies that aim to integrate the available knowledge about aerosol exposure to assess the potential risks or health impacts. Contributions from scientists from developing countries are particularly welcomed.

At the inaugural Symposium, the great Henry Walton quoted some words from Shakespeare's Hamlet, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! . . . this quintessence of dust." It is now time for the quintessence of dust to reassemble.

The conference website is now up and running and can be found at www.inhaledparticles.org

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Vincent, JH. (2003). Aerosol exposure: concepts, criteria, standards and applications. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*; 151: 012003. (http://iopscience.iop.org/1742-6596/151/1/012003/pdf/1742-6596_151_1_012003.pdf)

From the USA

AIHA

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Fall Conference

Sent by Zack Mansdorf, Program Chair, Academy of Industrial Hygiene, E-mail: mansdorf@tiac.net



The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) Fall Conference, formerly known as the Professional Conference on Industrial Hygiene (PCIH),

will be held in San Antonio, Texas, October 27-31, 2012. San Antonio is a very popular location with mild weather in the October time frame. It has more than 30 miles of nature trails, a vibrant night life, great restaurants and a beautiful river walk area that will be the site of our conference hotel.

The Fall Conference is being organized under four themes. These themes are Exposure Risk Assessment and Management (ERAM), Petrochemical and Gas, Product Stewardship and Sustainability and Management and Leadership. The conference will have professional development courses on the weekend before, the conference on Monday and Tuesday and some additional professional development courses on Wednesday. Monday and Tuesday will include breakfast discussions, keynote speakers, concurrent technical sessions, luncheon discussions, and afternoon workshops, and some additional technical presentations. Our keynote session on

Monday will be on managing low frequency/high severity events and on Tuesday a presentation on incorporating prevention through design methods into the design and redesign process.

We would be very happy to welcome you to San Antonio and an exciting conference. Please visit www.aihafallconference.org or email fallconference@aiha.org for additional details. Registration opens in June 2012.

AIHA Supports OSHA's Update of Hazard Communication Standard

Sent by Kathryn Grandstaff E-mail: kgrandstaff@aiha.org

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) has supported the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) update.

This final rule revises the HCS so that it is in alignment with the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

As Elizabeth Pullen, CIH, and AIHA President, stated: *"After more than 25 years since adoption of the HCS, AIHA is pleased that OSHA has finalized this update and fully supports provisions that update the development and distribution of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) for hazardous chemicals". ... "The new Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) not only greatly improve the quality of MSDSs by establishing a harmonized structure and meaningful recommendations of content but will improve the protection provided to workers, employers and chemical users". ... "With the continued expansion of the global economy, particularly in the manufacture and increased use of hazardous chemicals, many AIHA members have extensive experience and direct involvement with technical and policy issues regarding MSDSs and are involved in the development or review of MSDS for their employers. Aligning the HCS with the GHS will provide AIHA*

members better tools to protect workers on a worldwide basis".

While AIHA has not yet reviewed the entire final rule to determine specific requirements for training, exposure guidelines, hazard categories and other possible changes, AIHA believes that more standardized labels and SDSs will make hazard communication information easier to use and therefore improve employee protection from hazards. This is one of the main benefits of GHS implementation in addition to economic ones.

One area AIHA believes AIHA members can be of specific assistance to OSHA is the implementation stage of the final rule. As Pullen said, *"Industrial hygienists have a key role in improving the quality and value of information on an SDS. We intend to educate our members and others about the current activities related to the preparation and use of SDSs, including efforts to increase their quality and utility, implementation of a globally harmonized approach to their presentation, and updating the existing standards that provide guidance for development".*

News from ICOH

ICOH 2012

**Sent by Suvi Lehtinen, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health E-mail: Suvi.Lehtinen@ttl.fi
and Berenice Goelzer E-mail: berenice@goelzer.net**

The International Commission on Occupational Health, ICOH, organized its 30th International Congress on Occupational Health on 18–23 March in Cancun, Mexico. Close to 1,700 experts attended and contributed to the success of the meeting.

ICOH is an NGO in official relations with WHO and ILO. In addition to these International Organizations, ICOH's sister organizations, namely the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) represented by Noel Tresider, the



International Ergonomics Association (IEA) represented by Andrew Imada, and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) represented by Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, conveyed their best wishes for the success of the Congress in the Opening Session.

The theme of the Congress - "Occupational Health for All: From Research to Practice", is based on the belief that all workers of the world require health protection to prevent any occupational disease or injury as part of their human and labor rights.

As Dr Kazutaka Kogi, ICOH President, said in his Welcome speech: "Since the first Congress held in Milan in 1906, our triennial congresses have always played a front-line role in protecting and promoting the health of workers. This role is particularly vital throughout the time of rapid changes in employment structures, working life and work environments caused by the globalizing economy. These changes bring about complex health and safety risks for workers in all the sectors. It is timely to focus on workplace improvement actions applicable to managing complex risks in increasingly diversifying work situations."

In his Opening Keynote Professor Jorma Rantanen challenged all the Congress participants to launch a Cancun Charter on Occupational Health, with the aim of enhancing the priority of occupational health in political agendas. This was prepared for approval on the last day of the Congress and signed by the ICOH President, Dr. Kazutaka Kogi, the ICOH Secretary General, Dr. Sergio Iavicoli, the ICOH 2012 President, Dr. Jorge Morales, and the Chair of the Drafting Committee, Professor Jorma Rantanen.

As Dr Kogi pointed out: "The debate in Cancun will focus on proactive risk management procedures and innovative solution-based approaches. The progress in these aspects is seen in the broad-ranging activities of 35 ICOH Scientific Committees that have actively taken part in the organization of the symposia, mini-symposia and special sessions of the 2012 Congress. Serial sessions were organized to promote regional and network-

based cooperation for achieving good occupational health practices. The discussion and dialogue at the Congress aimed at helping all participants respond to urgent needs of workers and better understand the principles and ethics of our own occupational activities."

As Jorge A. Morales-Camino, President of the ICOH Congress 2012, mentioned: "To achieve such an important goal, we need to take advantage of new scientific information to develop innovative guidelines, new approaches and procedures, training courses, etc. to be applied to workers' health protection. Over 90% of scientific papers on occupational health are written in industrialized countries; however it is in developing countries where the most compelling needs in this field are a part of everyday reality. The Cancun Mexico Congress aimed at building a bridge between research and practice in order to help industrialized and developing countries improve the level of health protection for workers and help prevent occupational injuries and diseases."

The Congress, which held more than 200 Special Sessions and Oral Paper Sessions resulting in nearly 1450 presentations, and more than 450 poster sessions, disseminated information on topical issues such as occupational health as a human right; climate change and occupational health; nanotechnologies and their impact on occupational health; evidence base in occupational health, just to mention a few.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Jorge Morales and Dr. Elia Enriquez as the Local Organizers of the Congress. Drs. Elia Enriquez and Bonnie Rogers, ICOH Vice President, were Co-Chairs of the Scientific Programme and developed the science content in close collaboration with ICOH Scientific Committees, the National Organizing Committee, ICOH leaders, and many other international bodies who made many significant contributions.

For additional information on the Congress, please see:

<http://www.icohcongress2012cancun.org/>

News from PAHO/WHO

WHO/PAHO present in the 30th International Congress on Occupational Health in Cancun, Mexico: Occupational Health for all: from research to practice.

Sent by Julietta Rodríguez-Guzmán, Regional Advisor on Worker's Health, PAHO/WHO
E-mail: rodriguezj@paho.org

Starting the scientific program, Dr. Maria Neira, Director of Public Health and Environment at WHO addressed a keynote plenary conference on the topic of "Delivery of Occupational Health to All Workers". Her message enhanced the need to carry out actions to provide universal access to Primary Health Care by developing comprehensive health services, introducing national equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms and implementing vertical health programs, e.g. occupational health programs in the context of integrated health care. She reminded the need of bringing healthcare to where people live and work. As well, a policy direction for reform was mentioned including recommendations to working towards universal coverage with

OH services. She acknowledged that this approach entails certain complex measures, such as reducing the cost proportions to the individuals/workers undertaking services/ insurance schemes, adding interventions to existing packages for providing services, increasing the number of workers covered, and reducing barriers for health providers and access to workers/individuals accessing such services. For achieving it, a new health leadership with a solid regulatory framework guaranteeing a basic level of protection in all workplaces and for all workers is required, as well as careful planning for providing different occupational and primary health care services to under-served working populations.

A semi-plenary included a keynote conference about the current situation of "Occupational health in the Americas", delivered by PAHO's Regional Advisor on Worker's Health. The conference gave an overview of the problems, the needs and the ways approaching solutions to the series of social and economic inequities caused by employment and working conditions that the 468 million regional workforce face. The presentation highlighted: the tremendous heterogeneity of the Americas, the reality of employment, unemployment and under-employment, the impacts of poverty on the workforce, the severity and the burden of non-communicable diseases – including cancer and other chronic pathologies-, the under-diagnoses and under-registration of occupational injuries and diseases, the persistence of child labor and gender disparities, the presence of forced labor, and the increasing needs to improve working and living conditions to the growing informal sector involving a broad portion of vulnerable populations throughout the region. The strategic alliances made by PAHO to approach these problems and several of the successful regional initiatives to improve the situation were mentioned. As well, the ways forward being tailored and a call for actions from all stakeholders to improve the current situation were emphasized.

A total of seven simultaneous sessions were also organized to address different key topics of global/regional interest, as follows:

1. WHO Green economy
2. WHO Healthy workplaces
3. WHO Healthcare workers protection of bio-hazards
4. WHO healthcare workers initiative
5. WHO Classification of occupational diseases
6. WHO Caring for health of all workers: what we expect from PHC reforms?
7. WHO Occupational Radiation protection – global initiatives

Finally, three (3) expert work groups were organized aiming to analyze, discuss and contribute to the Regional Plan of Action on Worker's Health related to the following initiatives: Informal Economy Approaches; Occupational Cancer prevention; and OH and the emerging Green Economy.

In all the aforementioned events and priorities a huge need to strengthening Occupational Hygiene was made visible. The increasing need to build capacity and transfer technology and knowledge for controlling hazards at the workplace still remains to be a challenge to overcome throughout the region, with more emphasis in developing countries.

For further information please contact Julietta Rodríguez-Guzmán at rodriguezj@paho.org; or visit the web-page of the congress at: <http://www.icohcongress2012cancun.org/>.

News from WHO Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health

9th Meeting of the WHO Global Network of Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health

WHO held its 9th Global Meeting of the Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health (CCs) in Cancun, Mexico on 15-16 March 2012. The meeting was organized back to back with the ICOH Congress, which started in the afternoon of Sunday 18 March. The Planning Committee of Network, as well as the staff from WHO/HQ and the Regions, met on 14 March to discuss and reconfirm their priority action areas.

One hundred and twenty representatives from the CCs were present including three Regional Advisers (AMRO, EURO, SEARO) and the WHO/HQ secretariat, the ILO and the NGOs in official relations, namely the International Commission on

Occupational Health (ICOH), the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) and the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA). All members present worked on redefining their focused contributions towards the implementation of the WHO Global Plan of Action for Workers' Health, 2008-2017. The results of a number of working groups were collected in a 'Global Master Plan' with seven priority areas that would be covered by WHO and the CCs during that period with clearly defined activities and outcomes, and is shown on the following two pages.



WHO CCs - Planning Committee Meeting



WHO CCs - Work Session

One hundred and twenty representatives from the CCs were present including three Regional Advisers (AMRO, EURO, SEARO) and the WHO/HQ secretariat, the ILO and the NGOs in official relations, namely the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) and the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA). All members present worked on redefining their focused contributions towards the implementation of the WHO Global Plan of Action for Workers' Health, 2008-2017.

The results of a number of working groups were collected in a 'Global Master Plan' with seven priority areas that would be covered by WHO and the CCs during that period with clearly defined activities and outcomes, as follows:

WHO will be contacting network members to finalize their concrete commitments for the next years, particularly with those few CCs that did not attend. Working groups on the different priority areas will be created on EZcollab, a WHO online communication tool.

In 2013, the WHO Secretariat will report back to the World Health Assembly on the midterm status of the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Workers' Health. For this purpose, NIOSH created an attractive draft document with successes of CCs to be completed by WHO HQ and the Regions. This document will be the background document for the 2-page report to the World Health Assembly.

For more information, please contact Evelyn Kortum (kortume@who.int)

Global Master Plan for Implementing GPA (2012-2017)

Priorities	Products
Priority 1. Regional and national programmes on occupational NCDs with focus on cancer, silica and asbestos-related diseases	AMR Regional Product 1.1. Pan-American action on prevention of occupational cancer EUR Regional Product 1.2. National programmes for the elimination of asbestos related diseases in the WHO European Region SEA Regional Product 1.3. Asian asbestos initiative AMR Regional Product 1.4. American Asbestos Atlas AMR Regional Product 1.4. Pan-American programme for the elimination of silicosis EMR Regional Product 1.5. Eastern-Mediterranean programme for the elimination of silicosis
Priority 2. National programmes and good practices for occupational health and safety of health care workers	Global product 2.1. WHO/ILO global framework and guidance for the development of national occupational health programmes for health workers Global product 2.2. Success Stories and Good practices for occupational health of health workers Global product 2.3. Health WISE – improving working conditions and occupational health in health sector Global product 2.4. Implementation of WHO-ILO-UNAIDS policy guidelines for improving health worker access to HIV and TB prevention, treatment, care and support AMR Regional product 2.5 Initiative for protecting the health of health care workers in the Americas EMR Regional product. 2.6. Integrating standards for occupational health of Health Workers into Hospital accreditation systems in the Eastern Mediterranean Global Product 2.7. Revision of protecting HCW toolkit Global Product 2.8. Chemicals hazards - Assessment and management of chemical risks in the health care setting including exposure to hazardous drugs and linking the work to the Strategic Approach to International Chemical Management (SAICM) strengthening engagement of the health sector
Priority 3. Tools, standards and capacities for healthy workplaces	Global Product 3.1. WHO-sponsored international toolkits for healthy workplaces in SMEs and in the informal sector -improving the physical, chemical, biological, MSDs, and psychosocial working environment, personal resources and business responsibility Global Product 3.2. WHO modules for training on healthy workplaces Global Product 3.3. WHO guidelines on workplace action for protecting the health of workers EUR Regional Product 3.4. European report on prevention of NCDs through healthy lifestyle in healthy workplace AMR Regional product 3.5. Regional Tool kit on Workers' health promotion available on-line (SPANISH version)

Priority 4. Strengthening health systems, governance, capacities and service delivery for workers' health	<p>Global product 4.1 Enhancing occupational health in primary health care</p> <p>Global product 4.2 Creation, dissemination, and evaluation of training and education to support occupational health in health care systems</p> <p>Global product 4.3 Strengthening national health policies and systems regarding workers' health</p> <p>AMR Regional product 4.4. Regional Training program on occupational health for PHC professionals. Training course available on-line for 2 years (SPANISH version)</p>
Priority 5. Occupational health aspects of emerging technologies	<p>Global product 5.1. Knowledge base and framework for global action on incorporating workers' health into global policies and sectoral strategies for green economy and green jobs</p> <p>Global product 5.2. WHO Guidelines on "Protecting Workers from Potential Risks of Manufactured Nanomaterials" (NANOH)</p>
Priority 6. Classification, diagnostic and exposure criteria for occupational diseases	Global product 6.1. International classification, diagnostic and exposure criteria of occupational diseases
Priority 7. Knowledge networks on occupational health of vulnerable groups and high risk sectors	<p>Global Product 7.1. WHO-supported knowledge networks to advance information, policies, tools and resources to improve the health of vulnerable workers, including young workers, ageing, informal sector and vulnerable employment.</p> <p>Global Product 7.2. WHO-supported knowledge networks on improving the health of workers in high risk sectors, including construction, mining, transport and agriculture</p> <p>AMR Regional product 7.3. Regional Action Plan on preventing Occupational Injuries and diseases in the Informal Sector</p>

From the USA – NIOSH

WHO publishes a background document on nanotechnology

Sent by Dr. Vladimir Murashov, NIOSH E-mail: vmurashov@cdc.gov

The World Health Organization (WHO) is developing Guidelines to "Protecting Workers from Potential Risks of Manufactured Nanomaterials" (WHO/NANOH).

As an initial step towards the development of these Guidelines, WHO prepared a draft background document proposing content and focus of the Guidelines. This background document will be used by the Guideline Development Group to identify key questions to be addressed by the Guidelines. In order to ensure transparency and broad stakeholder participation throughout the process of guideline development, WHO posted the background document and the peer-review comments on the project web-site; the direct link is:

http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/nanotechnologies/en/.

The development of the WHO/NANOH Guidelines is presently funded through in-kind contributions from WHO, U.S. NIOSH and global experts from a wide range of countries and organizations. There is a critical need for external funding to support a broad range of activities associated with this project such as facilitating expert participation in project meetings, holding and sponsoring expert meetings, drafting and translating Guidelines and implementation documents, and pilot testing.

These activities will be spread over two years starting in 2012 for the development of the Guidelines with an additional year for the implementation phase. WHO seeks to initiate a dialogue with potential sponsors to explore possibilities for additional support for the development of these Guidelines. Potential sponsors are invited to contact the project at nanohealth@who.int.

These Guidelines aim at facilitating improvements in occupational health and safety of workers potentially exposed to nanomaterials in a broad range of manufacturing and social environments. It is estimated that there were 400,000 workers employed in nanotechnology industries worldwide in 2010, while this number would grow up to 6 million workers by 2020 (See: www.nano.gov/html/res/faqs.html).

Workers in all countries face new risks from manufacturing applications of rapidly advancing new technologies based on nanoscale atomic structures known as nanomaterials. The growing list of nanomaterial applications includes cosmetics, food packaging, clothing, disinfectants, surface coatings, and paints. Most of these nanomaterials are produced with simple processes and often in low and medium-income nations. Toxicological laboratory studies in animals have shown adverse effects such as inflammation and fibrosis in the lungs of animals resulting from exposures to some nanomaterials. Although

strong human studies of exposure and response to engineered nanomaterials are not currently available and more research is needed to predict the effects of nanomaterial exposures in humans, sufficient information is available to provide interim recommendations and guidance about prudent approaches to nanomaterial handling in the workplace.

Many low and medium-income countries lag behind in introducing occupational safety and health guidance for nanotechnology. This is why, the World Health Assembly identified exposure to nanomaterials as a priority action for the Global Plan of Action on Workers Health, it adopted in 2007, and the WHO Global Network of Collaborating Centers in

Occupational Health has selected this field as one of key focus of their activity.

The WHO/NANO H Guidelines will provide the basis for the development of an Implementation Guide of user-specific guidance and recommendations for four target groups: country ministries of health and labor; Occupational Safety and Health agencies and professional associations; Occupational Health and Hygiene professionals; workers and management.

For more information, contact Dr. Vladimir Murashov, Special Assistant to NIOSH Director, vmurashov@cdc.gov.

News from the ILO

World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2012

Sent by Seiji Machida, Director ILO SafeWork E-mail: Safework@ilo.org

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is an international annual campaign to promote safe, healthy, and decent work held every year on 28 April. This celebration is an integral part of the Global Strategy of the ILO's Programme on Safety and Health and the Environment (SafeWork) and its advocacy policy. Since 2003, the ILO observes the World Day for Safety and Health at Work stressing OSH trends and the importance of preventing accidents and diseases at work encouraging the efforts of its tripartite social partners. The 28th of April is also a day which the world's trade union movement has long associated with commemorating victims of occupational accidents and diseases. This year, as in previous years, tripartite events will be taking place world wide.

The theme for this year's World Day for Safety and Health at Work is:

Promoting safety and health in a green economy

There is a shift in the world to a greener economy. As the green economy progresses, it is essential that safety and health at work are integrated into green jobs policies. Even if certain jobs

are considered to be "green", the technologies used may not be safe at all. Green jobs should also be safe and healthy for workers and not only protect the environment. The ILO SafeWork Programme has prepared a report to serve as a background to this theme. It highlights occupational safety and health as an integral part of the promotion of green jobs and a greener economy as key drivers for achieving an economic and social development that is also environmentally sustainable.

Last year over 100 countries celebrated World Day for Safety and Health at Work. Events ranged from events organized jointly by government authorities, employers' organisations and trade unions to debates, workshops and exhibitions focusing on local priorities on occupational safety and health. There was extensive media coverage.

The ILO Report for the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2012 and other promotional material in English, French and Spanish, will be available on the Safework's Website for downloading shortly; direct link: www.ilo.org/safeday. We invite you to visit it and to use our products to organize your activities on that date.

New 2011 edition of the ILO International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses

Sent by Seiji Machida, Director ILO SafeWork E-mail: Safework@ilo.org

A new edition of the ILO International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses (Revised 2011) has been released and is now available from the ILO.

Despite important advances in respiratory medicine in many countries, disability and premature deaths arising from the inhalation of dust at work are common and remain a serious problem of continuing concern to the ILO.

The ILO's International Classification continues to provide the

universally recognized way to record abnormalities on the chest radiographs systematically. It is used for diagnosis of pneumoconioses and to monitor the health of workers occupationally exposed to silica, coalmine, asbestos and other mineral and organic dusts. Countless clinical and epidemiological research studies have relied on the ILO scheme, and it is frequently used to describe the appearances on chest radiographs of individuals whose lungs have been affected by their work and who are seeking compensation.

This revised edition of the Classification *Guidelines* extends the applicability of the ILO scheme to classifications of results from digital radiographic images of the chest offering very practical and beneficial solutions in many situations and countries where digital techniques are progressively used. The *ILO Standard Digital Images* (ILO 2011-D) have been produced for this purpose.

Publication of the revised (2011) Classification will be welcomed

by all concerned with combating occupational lung disease in both developing and developed countries.

For further information, please visit: http://www.ilo.org/safework/info/publications/WCMS_168260/lang-en/index.htm

Requests for acquiring the Classification can be made to the ILO Publications Department by fax: + 41 22 799 6938 or by email: pubvente@ilo.org

Stress Prevention at Work Checkpoints (Published by the ILO in 2012)

Sent by Seiji Machida, Director ILO SafeWork E-mail: Safework@ilo.org

Work-related stress is one of the most important issues in many countries. The negative impacts of stress are multiform and can include circulatory and gastrointestinal diseases as well as physical, psychosomatic and psycho-social problems. These in turn can lead to poor work performance, high accident and injury rates, and low productivity.

It is therefore of vital importance to optimize work conditions and organization. This new ILO publication includes easy-to-apply checkpoints for identifying stressors in working life and mitigating their harmful effects. It also provides guidance on linking workplace risk assessment with the process of stress prevention. The checkpoints in this publication are good practice for enterprises and organizations in general, and they are especially useful for companies and organizations that wish

to incorporate stress prevention into their overall occupational safety and health policy and management systems. Each of the checkpoints – illustrated in full colour – describes an action, indicates why it is necessary and how to carry it out, and provides further hints and points to remember.

This publication will be essential reading for national authorities, company and organizational managers, trade unions, occupational safety and health practitioners, and other parties with an interest in workplace stress prevention.

This publication could be downloaded from:

http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_168053/lang-en/index.htm

Ergonomic Checkpoints in Agriculture (Published by the ILO in 2012)

Sent by Seiji Machida, Director ILO SafeWork E-mail: Safework@ilo.org

Agriculture is one of the most hazardous sectors in both developing and developed countries. Increasing attention is being given to applying practical actions in rural and agricultural settings to reduce work-related accidents and diseases, improve living conditions and increase productivity. Reports from many countries have shown the feasibility and effectiveness of ergonomic innovations that have improved working and living conditions in rural and agricultural settings. Building on these good examples, this manual is intended to present practical and concrete guidance on easy-to-implement ergonomic improvements, most particularly in developing countries.

The result of long-term collaboration between the ILO and the International Ergonomics Association, this new ILO publication compiles 100 illustrated examples of practical ergonomic improvements that can be achieved at low or no cost. The

checkpoints each describe an action, indicate why it is necessary and how to carry it out, and provide further hints and points to remember. They focus on ergonomically designed tools and on best techniques for handling materials and arranging workstations, physical environments, welfare facilities, teamwork methods and community cooperation. This invaluable training tool is designed for all those concerned with creating a better workplace in agriculture and rural settings: employers, supervisors, workers, inspectors, safety and health personnel, trainers and educators, extension workers, engineers, ergonomists and designers.

This publication could be downloaded from:

http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_168042/lang-en/index.htm

Occupational safety and health for children in the fishing sector: New FAO-ILO Good practice guide available for comments

Sent by: Halshka Graczyk, IPEC, ILO E-mail: g8ipec@ilo.org

Most experts agree that the fishing and aquaculture sector is rife with occupational safety and health (OSH) hazards. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), fishing

at sea is likely to be the most dangerous occupation in the world (ILO, 1999). As the fisheries and aquaculture sector includes a wide range of activities, the associated OSH concerns

also vary, depending on technologies used and other circumstances.

Child labourers are susceptible to all the dangers faced by adult workers when placed in the same situation, but may suffer magnified health consequences due to their special developmental characteristics (such as thinner skin, deeper/more frequent breathing rate and poorer detoxification processes). Workplace hazards and their associated risks may therefore be much greater for child labourers than adult workers.

However many specifics are still lacking, particularly information on the OSH hazards that child face throughout the sector and appropriate ways of mitigating these hazards.

To increase the knowledge base on child labour in fisheries and to provide technical assistance for policy makers and government authorities, the Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO) and ILO have developed the: [“FAO-ILO good practice guide for addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture: policy and practice,”](http://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/child_labour_FAO-ILO/child_labour_FAO-ILO.pdf) this is a preliminary version for comments, which will be integrated in the final version in late 2012. The document can be accessed through this link: [ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/child_labour_FAO-ILO/child_labour_FAO-ILO.pdf](http://ftp.fao.org/FI/DOCUMENT/child_labour_FAO-ILO/child_labour_FAO-ILO.pdf).

All stakeholders, including international and national development organizations, government agencies, and social partners are encouraged to use the guidance document and to provide comments and inputs to improve it before it is published and disseminated more widely. Feedback and suggestions are hence solicited and should be submitted to termine@ilo.org by 30 April 2012. The final version will be prepared and circulated in July 2012.

Reference: ILO, 1999. Tripartite Meeting on Safety and Health in the Fishing Industry, Geneva, 13–17 December 1999.

News from the European Union

From EU-OSHA

Sent by: Birgit Müller, EU-OSHA E-mail: muller@osha.europa.eu

Countdown starts for new Healthy Workplaces Campaign

EU-OSHA's next Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2012-2013 “Working together for risk prevention” starts on 18 April 2012 and focuses on the twin concepts of management leadership and worker participation in occupational safety and health.

New campaign material already online at: www.healthy-workplaces.eu.

Leaflet; direct link: http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/leaflet_en.pdf

Campaign Guide “Management Leadership and Worker Participation in Occupational Safety and Health”; direct link:

http://www.healthy-workplaces.eu/campaign_guide_en.pdf

Active ageing tomorrow requires good safety and health today

Occupational safety and health has a crucial role to play in securing active ageing through a better and longer working life. That's the message that EU-OSHA is looking to communicate during the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

The 2nd European Opinion Poll on Occupational Safety and Health found that 87% of the general public across Europe believe that good occupational health and safety practices are important to help people work for longer before they retire (including 56% who say they are ‘very important’).

A recent Eurobarometer survey shows that many Europeans are ready for active ageing but their current occupational safety and health conditions might not allow them to continue working to an older age. Although the typical pensionable age is 65 years

across Europe, the average exit age from the labour force in 2009 was about 61.5 years according to Eurostat. In the Eurobarometer survey, four in ten (42%) Europeans believe that they will be capable of doing the work they are currently doing until the age of 65 or beyond, while 17% expect that they will not be able to carry on in their current job past the age of 59. EU-OSHA is actively involved in the promotion of the European Year for Active Ageing 2012 to reinforce the need for good occupational safety and health at all stages of working life.

Throughout the year, EU-OSHA will be publishing a range of information products and articles on our website as well as passing the message on at public events and conferences. Information available online at: <http://europa.eu/ey2012/>.

Stress in the workplace to rise, say 8 out of 10 in major pan-European opinion poll (Excerpts from the 27 March 2012 Press Release)

Job-related stress is a concern for the large majority of the European workforce, concludes the 2nd European Opinion Poll on Occupational Safety and Health. The survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), measured the opinions of over 35,000 members of the general public in 36 European countries on contemporary workplace issues including job-related stress, and the importance of occupational safety and health for economic competitiveness and in the context of longer working lives.

Eight in ten of the working population across Europe think that the number of people suffering from job-related stress over the next five years will increase (80%), with as many as 52% expecting this to 'increase a lot'. This echoes the findings of EU-OSHA's ESENER survey on new and emerging workplace risks which found that 79% of managers think that stress is an issue in their companies, making stress at work as important as workplace accidents for companies.

Work-related stress is one of the biggest health and safety challenges faced in Europe, representing a huge cost in terms of human distress and economic performance.

"The financial crisis and the changing world of work is making increased demands on workers, therefore it is unsurprising that work-related stress is at the forefront of people's minds," says Dr Christa Sedlatschek, Director of EU-OSHA. "Regardless of age, gender and organisation size an overwhelming majority of people believe that work-related stress will rise. Nonetheless there are interesting national variations in those who expect job-related stress to 'increase a lot', with Norwegians least worried (16%), for instance, and Greeks most worried about rising stress (83% 'increase a lot'). Tackling psychosocial risks is a major focus of EU-OSHA's work to improve the lives of workers across Europe."

The full results of the pan-European poll are available online at: <http://osha.europa.eu/en/safety-health-in-figures/index.html#tabs-2>

Contributions from Readers

From Canada

News from the IRSST, Canada

Sent by: Maura Tomi, IRSST E-mail: Maura.Tomi@irsst.qc.ca

7th International Conference on Safety of Industrial Automated Systems (SIAS)

The 7th International Conference on Safety of Industrial Automated Systems (SIAS) will be held in Montréal, on 11-12 October 2012.

Leading specialists in the field have been invited to give keynote addresses at this SIAS conference, which will be of interest to machine system users and designers, standard-setting bodies, manufacturers of safety systems and devices, and occupational health and safety experts concerned about the risks associated

with machines.

Please, note that the deadline for the early registration fee is 15 May 2012.

Further conference information can be found at: <http://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/sias2012.html>

Looking forward to seeing you in Montréal!

Strategies for Preventing Prolonged Disability in Work Related Musculoskeletal Disorders

The main purpose of this literature review published by the IRSST (Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail) was to provide an overview of the main topics and recent trends in contemporary work disability research and to identify potentially successful intervention modalities for preventing prolonged disability in workers compensated for Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs).

The major topics in work disability research appear to be the factors contributing to prolonged disability and a clear interest in intervention modalities for people at risk of prolonged disability. Multidisciplinary, multimodal, and targeted intervention is also

an increasingly prevalent topic in the studies reviewed. In addition, the investigation of psychosocial and ergonomic-related workplace factors, especially for workers identified as being at risk of prolonged disability, is frequently considered. Taking into account the different stakeholders' points of view also constitutes a widespread trend in contemporary research on intervention aimed at preventing prolonged disability in workers compensated for WRMSDs. Finally, the literature reviewed identifies a number of strategies as potentially successful in preventing prolonged disability.

The findings of this document will provide stakeholders and

practitioners in the work disability intervention field with potentially successful strategies for preventing prolonged disability and with information about specific areas in need of further research regarding workers compensated for WRMSDs.

The document could be downloaded at:

<http://www.irsst.qc.ca/media/documents/PubIRSST/R-719.pdf>

Evaluation of whole-body vibration exposure of operators of soil compactors

The IRSST published an evaluation of whole-body vibration (WBV) exposure of operators of soil compactors. Single-drum vibratory compactors are widely used for compaction of soils and road building.

This study investigates vibration properties and operator exposure to WBV of single-drum vibratory soil compactors through measurements, and presents spectral classes of vibration that could be applied for identifying desired interventions. Two test series were undertaken to characterize the mechanical vibration properties of the vehicles and vibration exposure of the operators. The first test series was performed on a test track under controlled conditions, namely, the speed, the amplitude of vibration due to the rotating mass integrated within the drum and the soil properties. The objective was to determine the vibration behaviours of the vehicles in terms of dominant ride frequencies and probable vibration modes. The second test series was undertaken at two different worksites in Québec in order to quantify and assess the WBV exposure under typical working conditions.

These results suggest that the use of an adequately tuned suspension seat would be vital for limiting the exposure below the action value, particularly for the 10-ton machine, which is most representative of the compactors used in Québec. It was observed that most of the compactors used in Québec do not employ a suspension at the seat and the cabin suspension is limited only to rubber mounts. Further efforts are also recommended to examine the design of suspension seats used in the newer vehicles and their actual adjustment in the field to limit the transmitted vibration. Further efforts in identifying optimal cabin mounts are also desirable and recommended for limiting the WBV exposure.

To download the report:

<http://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/-irsst-publication-evaluation-of-whole-body-vibration-exposure-operators-soil-compactors-r-709.html>

Effects of Concentration Peaks on Styrene Neurotoxicity in the Fibreglass Reinforced Plastics Industry

In a new research published by the IRSST, the researchers observed important styrene exposure peaks in the fibreglass reinforced plastics industry; in certain cases, the measured styrene values even exceeded the standards prescribed by the *Regulation respecting occupational health and safety*. Furthermore, the researchers noted that the volunteers exposed to styrene at average concentrations of 137 mg/m³ showed a frequency of irritation symptoms higher than the "Control group" or the "Average group."

As to the nervous system, the results showed no relationship between styrene at the exposure levels in this study and measurable effects. The results obtained with the "Group with peaks" were no different from those obtained with the "Control group" and the "Group without peaks".

In several studies, the styrene exposure duration (more than eight years) has been demonstrated to have a possible effect on the nervous system. This is an important factor to consider in

studying the chronic effects of styrene. The average duration of exposure of the workers in our study was only 5.6 years, which could explain the negative results that we obtained. The concentrations of the peaks remain high in the fibreglass reinforced plastics industry (FRPI) and must continue to receive particular attention by occupational hygienists when measuring styrene concentrations in the workplace.

To download the full text, please visit:

<http://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/-irsst-publication-effects-of-concentration-peaks-on-styrene-neurotoxicity-fibreglass-reinforced-plastics-industry-r-728.html>

The document is available in French as well at:

<http://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/-irsst-publication-effects-of-concentration-peaks-on-styrene-neurotoxicity-in-the-fibreglass-reinforced-plastics-sector-phase-ii-r-640.html>

From Ghana

Sowing the seeds for occupational hygiene in West Africa

Sent by Mahinda Seneviratne mahindas@hotmail.com

Dr Edith Clarke essieclarke@yahoo.com

Sweating from excessive heat from the furnace and the noise from machinery limiting communication, the young workers wore dust masks for protection from

metal breakers' welding fumes, while overhead cranes travelled rapidly with loads of scrap metal dangling precariously on magnets.

The site visit to a medium-sized steel plant in Accra's industrial suburb could not have given a better field experience of the diverse workplace hazards in a medium-sized industrial enterprise in Ghana.

Most of the participants had attended a workshop on *"Occupational Hygiene: A tool to improve OH in SMEs"*, held earlier in the week and had identified and discussed case studies of such hazards during the group sessions



Group work on case studies at hygiene workshop

The workplace visits were the culmination of the ICOH Conference on Occupational and Environmental Health in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), held on 18-20 October 2011, in Accra. The conference and workshops were organised by a team led by Dr Edith Clarke, Head of Occupational and Environmental Health at the Ghana Health Service, in collaboration with the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Scientific Committee on Occupational Health in Small-scale Enterprises and the Informal Sector. It was supported by a number of government, professional and private sector organisations in Ghana. This important Conference was presented on the November issues of the ICOH newsletter – direct link: http://www.icohweb.org/site_new/multimedia/newsletter/pdf/icoh_newsletter_2011_11.pdf



Site visit to steel making plant near Accra

The occupational hygiene workshop was attended by 37 participants from a diverse range of professions including medical specialists, OHS practitioners and public health officers from national, regional and district levels in Ghana. Participants from other African countries, including Nigeria and Namibia, as well as representatives from WHO and ILO also attended.

The workshop was facilitated by occupational hygienist Mahinda Seneviratne from Australia, Professors Ing-Marie Andersson and Gunnar Rosen from Dalarna University, Sweden, and Dr Kurt Rasmussen, an occupational physician from Herning Hospital, Denmark. This occupational hygiene workshop, which ran in parallel with a risk assessment workshop facilitated by a US EPA scientist, covered basic occupational hygiene concepts, case studies from SME as well as practical examples of video exposure monitoring.

Ghana is a country of 25 million people located on the western coast of sub-Saharan Africa. Its ancient gold mining and metallurgical reputation drew European powers from the 15th century to its coastline, which later was ruled until the 20th century by Britain as the Gold Coast. Today Ghana is a developing economy with a majority of workers in the agricultural sector and more than 90% of the workforce in small and medium size enterprises, or in the informal economy.

Ghana has a rapidly expanding petro-chemical sector, which will require skilled occupational hygiene and environmental assessment personnel. While providing some building blocks for the Ghanaians to develop its emerging occupational hygiene capabilities, the event also provided the visiting professionals with an insight into Ghana's strong scientific and medical education base as well as its rich culture and fascinating history.

This two-way exchange of knowledge is critical in promoting the aims and objectives of organisations such as IOHA and ICOH in developing national capabilities in occupational health globally. This experience in Ghana showed us that African countries have keen and energetic young professionals with much potential; however, they have been for far too long overlooked in international efforts in these areas.

Dr Ali El Sherif, Chief Medical Officer, Occupational Health Services of Namibia concluded: "We face similar problems as Ghana in relation to the delivery of OHS services to the SME sector in Namibia. This workshop has given us a better appreciation of occupational hygiene and how we can use this discipline more effectively in our countries."



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From Japan

Report on Indium and its compounds as respirable dust

Sent by Masayoshi Karasawa, Special Adviser of JAWEE-mail:m19419k@yahoo.co.jp

The Expert Committee on measures for preventing health hazards caused by toxic chemical substances, organized by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), Japan, and whose Chairperson is Mr. Seiichiro Kanno (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) finalized, in November 2011, the report on Indium and its compounds (excluding dust of metal Indium or Indium alloy), as respirable dusts, as well as Indium Oxide (evolving from molten Metal Indium).

Indium and Tin Oxide (ITO) have been manufactured, processed or handled in large quantities in Japan, as important raw materials for the manufacture of liquid crystal and other display devices (e.g., for personal computers, televisions, portable terminal devices, including touch-screen applications). Japan is the largest manufacturer of ITO, with about 80% of the world production.

The Expert Committee concluded that, in order to prevent serious diseases, such as lung cancer, interstitial pneumonia, pulmonary emphysema, pneumothorax or alveolar proteinosis in workers who engage in manufacturing, processing or handling of this group of substances, these should be strictly controlled, as potential carcinogens to humans by the Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards Due to Specified Chemical Substances. However, at present, in view of insufficient data, the Expert Committee could not determine the carcinogenicity of metallic Indium or Indium alloy dust to humans, if not accompanied by a melting process.

Nevertheless, there is a serious health threat to workers engaged in activities of manufacturing, processing and handling associated to ITO. In 2003, it was reported, in a Japanese plant, that a worker engaged in finishing compacted ITO by wet grinding was diagnosed with interstitial pneumonia and died of bilateral pneumothorax. Another example is the death, in 2010, of an operator of a hydrogen furnace in an American ITO plant due to respiratory failure as result of alveolar proteinosis.

In July 2004, the MHLW recognized this health threat to workers, and issued the notification by the Director of Chemical Hazards Control Division, Occupational Safety and Health Department, Labour Standards Bureau, alerting as to the risk of serious pulmonary disease due to the exposure to sintered materials containing 90 % indium oxide and 10 % tin oxide and requesting measures to prevent exposure to ITO.

Therefore, manufacturers in Japan were requested to conduct experimental toxicology studies with respect to ITO both concerning carcinogenicity and chronic toxicity (as a long term, two years toxicity study), as well as sub-acute toxicity studies. This study was contracted to the Japan Bioassay Research Centre and the final report, which was published as three scientific articles in the Journal of Occupational Health, Japan (Vol.53; No.2 March, No.3 May, 2011) and can be downloaded from: <http://joh.sanei.or.jp/e/index.html>, presented clear evidence of carcinogenicity of inhaled ITO in rats.

Taking a serious view of this report, MHLW followed, organized and conducted, during recent years, comprehensive studies on risk of health impairment due to exposure to ITO, including detailed evaluation of ITO toxicity; research on actual working conditions in manufacturing, processing or handling of these substances, and work environment and personal exposure measurements.

The results from the MHLW were disclosed in 2010. In view of these results and the need to manage/control ITO in order to prevent health hazards to workers, MHLW organized two Expert Committees, namely on "risk assessment due to toxic chemical substances" and "measures to prevent health hazards caused by toxic chemical substances". The latter focused on, the prevention of health hazards caused by Indium and its compounds, and prepared "The Technical Guideline for Preventing Health Impairment of Workers Engaged in the Indium Tin Oxide Handling Processes", which was finalized in September 2010.

From the results of the above-mentioned studies, remarkable knowledge was obtained, concerning ITO toxicity and its threshold value, including:

- ITO may be a carcinogen to humans, if it is inhaled as respirable dust;
- ITO may induce cancer at very low concentrations; according to the above-mentioned inhalation carcinogenicity studies, its LOAEL (lowest observable adverse effect level), inducing a statistically significant increase of bronchiolo-alveolar adenoma and carcinoma, was $0.01\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.
- As to serious health hazards, other than cancer, a value of $3.0 \times 10^{-4}\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ as an exposure limit would be acceptable.

It should be noted that the Japanese results concerning occupational exposure limit (threshold value) for Indium and its compounds, derived from the LOAEL of $0.01\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$, led to a much lower concentration than the ACGIH TLV-TWA of $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ and also the work place exposure limit in the UK.

Working environment measurements, including personal exposure measurements, under actual working conditions in manufacturing, processing or handling ITO, showed Indium concentrations much higher than $3.0 \times 10^{-4}\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$.

Based on this important knowledge, the Expert Committee considered that it was necessary to adopt measures to prevent the serious consequences of exposure to ITO, and finalized control standards (under the Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards Due to Specified Chemical Substances under the Occupational Safety and Health Law), containing measures that include:

- 1) Containment of factory equipment, which manufacture, process, or handle ITO (including Indium Oxide generated from melting metal Indium), and installation of local exhaust ventilation including the push-pull type;
 - 2) Adequate Management of the related work methods, including appointment of a supervisor knowledgeable on prevention of health hazards posed by chemicals;
 - 3) Good housekeeping of workplaces, through appropriate cleaning methods, in order to prevent secondary dust sources;
 - 4) Use of appropriate respiratory personal protective equipments in response to the very low target occupational exposure limit;
 - 5) Working environment measurements;
 - 6) Specific health surveillance;
 - 7) Preparing, and keeping for thirty years, work records and summaries of handling procedures, as well as results from related working environment measurements and specific health surveillance.
- Measures to prevent Indium and ITO related diseases should be required not only in Japan but also in all countries dealing these substances;
 - Occupational Health Standards to prevent the above-mentioned diseases should be internationally harmonized.

Since industry has a legitimate concern, it is important to bring these conclusions, including its scientific and medical bases, to the international community in order to get understanding from colleagues around the world, hopefully leading to similar control requirements everywhere.

NOTE: Further information, including details on how the threshold values were calculated, both concerning carcinogenicity and other serious health hazards, may be obtained from the author, Mr. M. Karasawa, Licensed Occupational Hygiene Consultant, Member of the Expert Committee on the Measures for Prevention of Health Hazards caused by Toxic Chemical Substances, MHLW, Japan.

In November 2011, the Committee held a public hearing, involving representatives from the concerned industries, who expressed the following:

From the Netherlands

And the Winner is.....

Sent by Andrea Hidding, NVvA E-mail: Andrea.Hiddinga@arbounie.nl

The “Buitenlandbeurs” Prize for Foreign projects was granted for the fifth time, on 25 March 2012, by the NVvA, the Netherlands.

The “Buitenlandbeurs” offers the Dutch Association of Occupational Hygiene (NVvA) the possibility to promote occupational health in developing countries, with an amount of €10.000 available for one or more projects. This year three completely different projects were submitted. In this article you will find a small summary of the projects and the name of the winner.



NVvA President Joost van Rooij presenting the Buitenlandbeurs prize

Summary of the projects

Project 1 - Improvement of labour conditions in the Clothing industry of Bangladesh by Koen Verbist and Hester Dekker

Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) is an international verification initiative dedicated to enhancing workers' lives all over the world. FWF works closely with a growing number of companies that produce clothing and other sewn products and that take responsibility for their supply chain. FWF keeps track of the improvements made by the companies it works with. And through sharing expertise, social dialogue and strengthening industrial relations, FWF increases the effectiveness of the efforts made by companies.

The fair wear foundation has own auditors which audit the clothing companies on occupational hygiene. The audits are on one side focussed on the inspection of documents and on the other side on the actual working condition in the factory. Workers are interviewed and the plant/factory is inspected. From the FWF the impression exists that the auditors have enough knowledge for a global inspection but on specific items (e.g., chemical agents) they do not always find the relevant sources of information. As a result of that, the inspection reports differ significantly.

- 1) The project is focussed on supporting the auditors with customized information and support so they are better able to identify the risks and give advice on corrective actions.
- 2) Developing a guidance document on dangerous substances for the FWF that can be deployed within shoe factories as information and communication tool
- 3) Develop a format about exposure to chemicals that the FWF can incorporate in the code of conduct for clothing

companies. Working with chemicals is in the code of conduct almost not addressed.

Project 2 - Strengthening of the Latin American occupational hygiene associations by means of the preparation of a common work program by Rudolf van der Haar

Rudolf van der Haar is an occupational hygienist working with Divisi3n de Servicios de Prevenci3n in Barcelona (Spain). The project has as a main goal strengthening of the Latin American occupational hygiene associations by means of the preparation of a common work program.

Currently, there are six occupational hygiene associations in several Latin American countries. Some members of these associations participated in the first consultative meeting on occupational hygiene held in 1998 in S3o Paulo (Brazil). During this meeting, profession development strategies were identified, emphasizing the important role of the professional associations for its implementation.

Although in later years various Latin American associations' maintained contact with each other, no specific follow-up meeting of the agreements reached in Sao Paulo, has been organized. For this reason, this project aims to give new impetus to coordinate and implement occupational hygiene activities in Latin America by organizing a new meeting with the professional associations.

To achieve this objective poll among the Latin American occupational hygiene associations will be conducted in order to establish a detailed agenda for the meeting and to prepare needed working documents. Secondly a meeting with participation of the Latin American occupational hygiene associations will be organized. The coordination of these activities will be led by Rudolf van der Haar, vice president of the Spanish Association of Industrial Hygiene and member of the Foundation "Heath Workers Impulse" in conjunction with the board of all involved associations.

Project 3 - A safe future for the Zambian wood en metal worker by Hilde Bussink and Annemieke Leegwater

The third project was submitted by the coaches from the

project 5x Better, Work is healthy and focuses on improvement of working conditions in the metal and wood industry in Zambia. The project 5x Better, Work is healthy is an initiative of employer organizations and unions in the Metalworking and Metal electro in the Netherlands, to improve working conditions.

This project is carried out in cooperation with St. Ambrose institute. St. Ambrose is an educational institute in Kafue (Zambia) for young Zambian people. In return for work, the Zambians earn a part of their education. Knowledge in the area of safety and health is limited.

The project 5x Better, Work is healthy want to provide the St. Ambrose institute with, safety instruction leaflet (for every department), Instruction and education for teachers, student and supervisors on occupational exposure (dust, noise, welding fumes) and safe work procedures, good housekeeping e.g. and finally the chance for a Zambian metalworker to come to the Netherlands and get an education in a Dutch metal company.

The jury

A jury of four experienced occupational hygienists (P. Swuste, J. Terwoert, M. Sturm and V. Correia) judged the three submitted projects on different aspects such as the choice of subject, originality, population at risk, relation with activities of the NVvA, transparency of the project, possibilities of realisation, succession on short term and implementation chances on long term. It was a close call between 2 projects,

And the winner is.....Rudolf van der Haar.

In the jury report the importance of this initiative, focussing on strengthening the contacts with Latin American countries, an area where business development goes fast, is emphasized.

On behalf of the Dutch Association of Occupational Hygiene (NVvA) we like to congratulate Rudolf and his co-workers with the price of €10.000. We look forward to hear from him next year on the NVvA conference, where he will be presenting the results of this project.

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**International Occupational Hygiene Association
5/6 Melbourne Business Court
Millennium Way
Derby DE24 8LZ
UK**

Tel: +44 (0) 1332 298101 Fax: +44 (0) 1332 298099 email: admin@ioha.net web: www.ioha.net

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