

# Diseases related to occupational hazards

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# Objectives

By the end of the session students should be able to;

- ▶ Define Occupational Health
- ▶ Enlist, major diseases related to occupational hazards
  - Physical hazards, heat, light, pressure, noise, radiation, electricity, mechanical factors
  - Chemical agents
    - Gases, fumes, dust, metals and their compounds, solvents
  - Biological agents
  - Occupational cancers
  - Occupational dermatosis
- ▶ Understand sign and symptoms, and diagnosis of occupational diseases of public health importance
- ▶ Discuss the scope of Occupational Health and safety

# Occupational Health

- ▶ **Def:**

- ▶ It is the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of Physical, Mental, and Social Well-being of workers in all occupations by preventing departures from health, controlling risks and the adaptation of work, and people to their jobs.

# Industrial Hygiene

- ▶ Activities directed to identifying, assessing, preventing, and managing hazards to the worker. In the working environment, falls in the domain of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).
- ▶ Activities are systematic and scientific

# Ergonomics

- ▶ Stress evaluation occurring in a work environment and the ability of people to cope with these stresses.
- ▶ Designing suitably, the facilities, furniture, equipment, tools, and job demands to make them compatible with the work-force capabilities and limitations.

# Aims of Occupational Health and safety

- ▶ Ensure the highest degree of Physical, mental, and social well-being of workers in their occupations
- ▶ Preventing adverse effects on health due to work place hazards
- ▶ Preventing and controlling hazards of occupations
- ▶ Matching health and safety needs with suitable occupational environment
- ▶ Continued adaptation of workers to work and vice-versa

# Occupational and work related diseases?



# Definition

- ▶ Occupational diseases are adverse health conditions in the human being, the occurrence or severity of which is related to exposure to factors on the job or in the work environment.
- ▶ Types of hazards:
  - ▶ Physical: e.g. heat, noise, radiation
  - ▶ Chemical: e.g. solvents, pesticides, heavy metals, dust
  - ▶ Biological: e.g. tuberculosis, hepatitis B virus, HIV
  - ▶ Ergonomic: e.g. improperly designed tools or work areas, repetitive motions
  - ▶ Psychosocial stressors: e.g. lack of control over work, inadequate personal support
  - ▶ Mechanical: these mainly cause work accidents and injuries rather than occupational diseases.



# Characteristics of occupational diseases

- ▶ The **clinical and pathological presentation** are **identical** to that of non-occupational diseases; e.g. asthma
- ▶ Occupational disease may **occur after the termination of exposure**. Eg: asbestos-related mesothelioma (a cancer affecting the lung and abdomen) which can occur 30 or 40 years after the exposure.
- ▶ The clinical manifestations of occupational disease are related to the **dose and timing of exposure**; e.g. at very high airborne concentrations, elemental mercury is acutely toxic to the lungs and can cause pulmonary failure, while at lower levels of exposure, elemental mercury has no pathologic effect on the lungs but can have chronic adverse effects on the central and peripheral nervous systems.
- ▶ Occupational factors can **act in combination** with non-occupational factors to produce disease; e.g. exposure to asbestos (five-fold increase in lung cancer ); and the long-term smoking of cigarettes (increases the risk by 50 and 70 fold).

# Diseases due to physical agents

Heat	Heat hyperpyrexia, exhaustion, syncope, cramps, burns
Cold	Trench foot, frost bite
Light	Occupational cataracts, miner's nystagmus
Pressure	Caisson disease, air embolism, blast (explosion)
Noise	Occupational deafness
Radiation	Cancers, leukemias, aplastic anemia, pancytopenia
Mechanical factors	Injuries, accidents
Electricity	Burns

# Diseases due to chemical agents

Gases	CO <sub>2</sub> , CO, HCN, N <sub>2</sub> , NH <sub>3</sub> , HCL
Dusts (pneumoconiosis)	Coal dust (anthracosis), silica (silicosis), asbestos (asbestosis, Ca lung), iron (siderosis) Cane fiber (bagassosis), cotton dust (byssinosis), tobacco (tobacossosis), hay or grain dust (farmers lung)
Metals and their compounds	Toxicity from Lead, mercury, cadmium, mercury, arsenic
Chemicals	Acids, alkalis, pesticides
Biological agents	Brucellosis, leptospirosis, anthrax, tetanus, encephalitis, fungal infections
Occupational cancers	Skin, lung, bladder
Occupational dermatosis	Dermatitis and eczema
Psychological origin	Industrial neurosis, hypertension, peptic ulcer

# Pulmonary dust diseases

- ▶ **Pneumoconiosis** is disabling pulmonary fibrosis that results from the inhalation of various types of inorganic dust, such as silica, asbestos, coal, talc and china clay.
  - ▶ e.g. silicosis and asbestosis

# Silicosis

- ▶ Crystalline silica ( $\text{SiO}_2$ )
- ▶ **Occupations:**
  - ▶ mining (coal, mica, gold, silver, lead, zn)
  - ▶ stone cutting and shaping, sandblasting (building and construction)
  - ▶ glass and ceramics manufacture
  - ▶ Iron and steel industry



**Time to develop:** 7-10 years, sometimes less. Prolonged exposure to higher concentrations of dust

**Presentation:** dyspnoea on exertion , pulmonary tuberculosis and cardiac or respiratory failure , impaired TLC (total lung capacity)

**Diagnosis:** x-ray ....snow storm appearance

**Progressive disease and converts to TB**

“prevention and regular physical examinations ”

# Asbestosis

- ▶ Inhalation of asbestos fibres

- ▶ Occupations:

- ▶ mining and extraction

- ▶ exposure to asbestos ... insulation

- ▶ making of asbestos cloth

- ▶ manufacture of asbestos cement pipes and other products, vinyl floor tiles and in brake and cloth lining

**Sign & symptoms:** interstitial fibrosis of the lungs, pleural thickening, calcification.

- ▶ Bronchogenic carcinoma, pleural and peritoneal mesothelioma

- ▶ progressive dyspnoea on exertion, cough, expectoration, chest pain, cyanosis and clubbing of the fingers

**Diagnosis:** **asbestos bodies** in sputum (asbestos fibres coated with fibrin), X-ray findings , **ground-glass appearance** in lower 2/3 rd lung

**Progressive diseases**

“ prevention and periodic examinations”





# Lead poisoning

- ▶ Occupational usage (Industrial):
  - ▶ Storage batteries, glass, ship building, printing and potteries, rubber
- ▶ Non-occupational :
  - ▶ Gasoline, drinking water via lead pipes, paints, toys





# Modes of absorption

- ▶ **Inhalation** of fumes and dust
- ▶ **Ingestion** through food or drink
- ▶ **Skin absorption** “tetraethyl lead”

# Clinical features

▶ 70 microgram/ 100 ml.....clinical signs and symptoms

▶ **Inorganic lead:**

- ▶ Plumbism
- ▶ Abdominal colic
- ▶ Obstinate constipation
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶ Blue lines on the gums
- ▶ Anemia
- ▶ Wrist and foot drop

**organic lead:**

- Insomnia
- Headache
- Mental confusion
- Delirium

# Lead poisoning .....cont

- ▶ Lab diagnosis:
  - ▶ Coproporphyrin in urine (screening test)
  - ▶ Amino levulinic acid in urine
  - ▶ Lead levels in blood and urine
- ▶ Prevention:
  - ▶ Substitution
  - ▶ Isolation
  - ▶ Local exhaust ventilation
  - ▶ Personal protection
  - ▶ Periodic examinations personal hygiene; handwashing
  - ▶ Health education

# Occupational cancers

## ▶ Carcinogenic agent

- ▶ Arsenic
- ▶ Chromium compounds, hexavalents
- ▶ Nickel
- ▶ Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
- ▶ Coal tars
  
- ▶ Benzol
- ▶ B-naphthalamine
- ▶ Ionizing radiation
  
- ▶ Asbestos

## Organ affected

Skin and lung

Lung

Lung and nasal sinus

Skin

Skin, scrotum, lung,  
bladder

Blood (leukaemia)

Bladder

Skin, bone, lung,  
blood (leukaemia)

Lung, pleura, peritoneum

# Occupational dermatitis

## ▶ Causes:

- ▶ Heat, cold, moisture, friction, pressure, x-rays, acids, alkalis, solvents, grease, tar, pitch, bacteria, fungi, leaves, vegetables, fruits

## ▶ Classification

- ▶ Primary irritants
- ▶ Sensitizing substances

## ▶ Prevention:

- ▶ Pre-selection
- ▶ Protection
- ▶ Personal hygiene
- ▶ Periodic assessments

# Radiation hazards

- ▶ **Industrial exposures:** manufacture of radioactive paints, painting of luminous dials for watches, mining of radioactive ores, sand workers, x-rays rooms
- ▶ **Effects of radiation:** Acute burns, dermatitis, blood dyscrasis, malignancies, genetic effects.
- ▶ **Prevention :**
  - ▶ Shielding in x-ray areas, monitoring 6 monthly, for their film badge or pocket electronic device, adequate workplace ventilation, replacement and periodic exams.
  - ▶ Pregnant ladies should not be allowed to work in the area

# Prevention of occupational disease

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# Medical measures

- ▶ Pre-placement exams
- ▶ Periodic examinations
- ▶ Medical and health care services
- ▶ Notifications
- ▶ Supervision of working environment
- ▶ Maintenance and analysis of records
- ▶ Health education and counseling



# Engineering measures

- ▶ Designing of the buildings
- ▶ Good house keeping
- ▶ General ventilation
- ▶ Substitution
- ▶ Dusts
- ▶ Enclose
- ▶ Isolate
- ▶ Local exhausts ventilations
- ▶ Protective devices
- ▶ Environmental monitoring
- ▶ Research

# Legislations

- ▶ Policies and regulations for factories, work places, health of the workers eg insurance, sickness policies, disability benefits, ect



# References

- ▶ Park text book (pgs 803-817)
- ▶ Occupational health. A manual for primary health care workers. Available at: [https://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/regions/en/oehemhealthcareworkers.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/occupational_health/regions/en/oehemhealthcareworkers.pdf?ua=1)