OCCURRENCE OF CHEMICAL EXPOSURE IN SMALL INDUSTRY IN SOUTHERN FINLAND, 1976

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide information on the occurrence of chemical exposure in small industry. One hundred workplaces were chosen by random sampling. Each worker’s chemical exposure was assessed according to a uniform procedure. The prevalence of risk exposures according to the Finnish limit value (FLV<sub>15 min</sub>) was 7.3%, more than twice the prevalence of risk exposures according to the FLV<sub>8h</sub> (2.8% N = 1181). The average number of chemical exposures per exposed worker was 1.8. Chemical exposures with a sensitizing property (about 50% of the exposures) were more common than those with toxic (about 30%) or carcinogenic properties (20%) (N = 769). Within small industry chemical risk grew monotonically from the smallest size category (5–9 workers) to the larger size category (20–49 workers). However, there were great differences in the prevalence of chemical exposures according to the type of industry. One can conclude that chemical exposure in small industry is complex in character. The risk evaluation of peak exposures is discussed.

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