

workplace regulation is fractioned into multiple federal and provincial jurisdictions. As part of the CAREX Canada project, measured exposure data is being centralized in a Canadian workplace exposure database (CWED).

Methods Fifteen Canadian regulatory jurisdictions were contacted with open-ended survey questions pertaining to their existing occupational exposure data (number of records, storage format, retention), sampling practices (historical time frame, yearly rate), and regulatory practices. Data were requested from all jurisdictions. Temporal, geographical, and industry-based data gaps were identified; efforts to fill these are underway.

Results Initially, two provincial databases (N=70 000 and 110 000 samples) and one national radiation exposure database (N=150 000) were obtained for integration into the CWED, providing a solid base for exposure estimates. Although obtaining data has been more complicated than predicted, CAREX Canada's evolving partnerships with other Canadian jurisdictions will ensure that some existing gaps are filled. The CWED is anticipated to grow from its current size of 330 000 entries to 430 000 entries by 2013.

Conclusions The CWED will be a useful stand-alone tool for exposure related questions. It will also be an excellent source of information for a variety of end-users in the areas of primary prevention, research, and exposure and disease surveillance. Examples of the CWED's utility to epidemiologic research and challenges associated with its development will be discussed.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL CANADIAN WORKPLACE EXPOSURE DATABASE: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

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Objectives Workplace exposure databases are important tools in epidemiologic research and have been established in several countries. With the exception of radiation, a national occupational database has not existed in Canada, in part because