AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL COHORT STUDY OF WORKERS IN THE HARD-METAL INDUSTRY - AUSTRIAN COMPONENT

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Objectives Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Illinois at Chicago are coordinating an international historical cohort study of workers in the hard-metal industry. Funding is provided in part by the International Tungsten Industry Association. From Austria they approached a large industrial plant in Reutte, Tyrol, and the Institute of Environmental Health at the Medical University of Vienna to coordinate the Austrian part of the study that is financially supported by the national workers insurance company.

Methods As a first result of the cooperation between Reutte and Vienna a cross-sectional study was designed based on a questionnaire directed to all present workers and to past workers with still valid addresses. This questionnaire served two purposes: (1) to announce the aim of the cohort study and (2) to obtain more detailed data on smoking history and general health history than is available in the company records.

Results Our preliminary estimates of the numbers of participants at the two Bavarian plants are 2,711 and 1,577. At the North Rhine-Westphalian plant we have enrolled 3,700 workers (less than half of the overall workforce). Some current workers refused to be enrolled in the study. 3.7% of 676 and 0.2% of 417 at Bavarian plants and 0.9% of 637 at North Rhine-Westphalian plant. Basic data of these workers will be documented.

Conclusions The data collection process in North Rhine-Westphalia was restricted due to the large number of paper files. Otherwise it would not be feasible to meet the budget and time schedule of the international pooling project. Vital status and cause of death tracing are challenging in Germany. We will try to optimise procedures in cooperation with the responsible institutions.

AN INTERNATIONAL HISTORICAL COHORT STUDY OF SWEDISH WORKERS IN THE HARD-METAL INDUSTRY

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Objectives In 2006, IARC found limited evidence in humans and sufficient evidence in animals that tungsten carbide (WC) with cobalt binder (WC-Co) acted as a lung carcinogen (Group 2A). A Swedish historical cohort study was established as part of the international cohort. Three Swedish sites are included,