Many industries by the nature of their business have to locate themselves in remote locations often distant from urban centres. This remoteness creates many challenges, not least in the provision of medical care, and in the practice of occupational health for the employees. During this session we will look at different aspects of medical and occupational health care in these remote settings and how some of the challenges can be overcome. My colleagues will discuss the provision of medical services in remote locations, and the particular features of the provision of occupational health services in Russian Siberia, in the Deserts of the Gulf Region in the Middle East and in Malaysia.

Before looking at the examples we will examine elements of the Health Risk Assessment (HRA) that should be carried out to enable the formulation of the Health Plan. Ideally the HRA should be carried out well in advance of the commencement of operations, but that does not always happen. Elements to be considered include:

- Health Hazards of the operation and project
- Local climate
- Patterns of diseases and illness, in the community and local workforce
- Levels of education in the local workforce, including awareness of health and safety
- Standards and access to local health care
- Availability of National Medical and Nursing staff – requirements for local employment
- Routes for medical evacuation
- National Legislation
- Industry and International Standards
- Access to food and drinking water
- Security Situation
- Potential Community Health Projects

All these elements and more need to be considered to formulate and execute a comprehensive medical and occupational health plan.

Occupational Health management in the Middle East presents many interesting and complex challenges. Some of the challenges are due to the climate and topography as might be expected. However other challenges may not be so obvious related to culture demography and politics.

In terms of climate, occupationally it is necessary to protect workers in temperatures of +50°C plus, in many areas high temperature is combined with high levels of humidity. This presents a significant challenge and if with WBGT method of worker heat management was used then work would be curtailed for significant portions of the year. More flexible but effective approaches to heat management have to be adopted. The Holy month of Ramadan dramatically compounds the issues relating to heat exposure and resultant heat illnesses.

Distance is also a significant challenge some sites are very remote from health care and it is necessary to arrange medical evacuation routes to centres of medical excellence. Workers often live in work camps, and if not well managed infectious diseases like Norovirus, TB can significantly impact the workforce. Camp Health and Hygiene (food, water, sanitation, etc.) form an integral part of OH responsibilities.

Demographically in some countries in the Gulf of Arabia there are large numbers of migrant workers, >80% of the population in UAE and Qatar. These workers often have existing health concerns, which require ongoing management. Also they can bring diseases from their home locations to the area of work e.g. Malaria. Migrant worker welfare and CSR programs are an integral part of workplace health provision in these environments, which includes local competency building and nationalisation programs ultimately resulting in sustainable developments.

There are also the usual anxieties and psychiatric risk factors of living away from home and family which have significant impact on mental health. Programs need to be arranged...
to address these issues. Workplace resilience and wellbeing programs are critical factors in successful health delivery.

Lastly, the security situation in the Middle East countries can impact Occupational Health. Not only with increased stress levels, but also impact upon the accessibility of internationally acceptable standards of health care, medical escalations and patient ground/air movements.

**1619c OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IN TROPICAL FISHERIES PRACTICE**

1A Elias, 2M Mahajom. 1Sunway Medical Centre, Malaysia; 2Disease Control Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia

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**Introduction** The Malaysian fishing industry has experienced tremendous growth in recent years due to increases in demand as well as research and development. In many countries, the fishing industry is considered as one of the highest risk occupational groups. Therefore, there is a need to address the occupational health issues in local fisheries practice. The work-related diseases, health status and awareness on occupational health have been reviewed in relation to the local fishing industry.

**Methods** A comprehensive systematic search was conducted on the scientific literature, national legislations and guidelines related to the work-related diseases and health status of workers in local fishing industry. Focus group discussions with key stakeholders were conducted to obtain information about awareness and prevention of work-related diseases in the group of workers.

**Results** The health problems among workers in the tropical fisheries have been attributed mainly to musculoskeletal disorders, exposure to heat, chemicals, and long hours of work, stress and intravenous drug use. There are national legislations that regulate the occupational health and safety aspect of the fishing industry. However, the provided guidelines may not be sufficient to address specific occupational health issues among these workers. The stakeholders highlighted low awareness and low level of knowledge of occupational health in the sector. Barriers to the issues included low priority, cost of training, management support and safety culture.

**Discussion** The findings of this review and focus group discussions offer some important insights into the importance of developing an awareness programme for workers in fishing industry. Prevention of work-related diseases and other diseases should be a high priority to protect these workers.

**1619d OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IN SIBERIA AND ARCTIC ZONES**

SA Antipov, Centre of Corporate Medicine, Tarnsk, Russia

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Siberia and its northern territories in particular represent an extremely problematic region from the point of medical assistance organisation. This is caused by the harsh climate and significant remoteness of settlements and industrial facilities from cities with developed medical infrastructure. In this regard, the activities aimed at developing standards for medical care provision at remote sites and training specialists to work there represent significant relevance. Centre of Corporate Medicine possesses more than 10 years of experience in this field at remote oil and gas industrial facilities. The standards for medical assistance organisation have been developed with systemic approach to workers’ nutrition and rest taking into account climatic and geographical features of the region as well as the labour regime at remote sites. The provision of medical assistance in regular and emergency situations is regulated by the algorithms of medical personnel actions. Telemedicine technologies and consultancy via the 24/7 call-centre are utilised to control the adequacy of diagnostic and treatment procedures. A scientific research program is being currently developed devoted to the estimation of natural and technogenic factors influencing industrial workers’ health in order to elaborate targeted programs for occupational diseases prevention and prolongation of productive longevity.