Solvents

ASSESSMENT OF HEARING FUNCTION IN WORKERS EXPOSED TO ORGANIC SOLVENTS: A STUDY OF 34 CASES

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Introduction Exposure to organic solvents (OS) represents an occupational hazard in industrial settings, which may be responsible for several neurosensory effects, including ototoxicity. The assessment of hearing function in workers exposed to SO is of great value.

Aim To assess, using a validated questionnaire, the hearing function of workers exposed to SO.

Methods Descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in the occupational medicine department of Charles Nicolle Hospital in Tunis, having interested patients exposed to SO who consulted for a medical opinion of fitness for work during the period from January 1, 2017 to August 31, 2022. The quality of hearing function was assessed using the 12-item Speech, Spatial, and Qualities of Hearing Scale (SSQ12).

Results Thirty-four workers exposed to SO participated in the study. The average age was 44±8 years with a clear male predominance of 75%. The most represented sectors of activity were the automotive industry (34%), followed by the leather and shoe industry (15%) and the plastics industry (12%). The jobs most exposed to SO were manual workers (54%) and painters (9%). The median job tenure was 15 [10; 23] years. The presence of comorbidities was noted in 70% of the employees, three of whom were being followed up for unilateral deafness. Co-exposure to noise was noted in 18% of the workers. The mean global SSQ12 score was 7. The average speech subscale was 7.3 and the average spatial subscale was 7.5. The quality subscale had the lowest score at 6. Employees reporting a hearing impairment were scheduled for a pure tone audiometry assessment.

Conclusion The effect of exposure to OS on the quality of hearing function appears to be considerable. Monitoring with a combination of a validated questionnaire and pure tone audiometry is necessary in exposed workers to detect hearing loss at an early stage.

Work organisation, including precarious work/Working conditions

WAS TELEWORK DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE?

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Introduction The use of telework was strongly recommended by the World Health Organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic. It may have, in addition to advantages, psycho-social repercussions on workers. The aim of this study was to describe the psychosocial impact of telework during the era of quarantine related to the first pandemic wave of COVID-19.

Materials and Methods Descriptive cross-sectional study including Tunisian workers who teleremoted during the first health lockdown of 2020. Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire specifying the occupational and psychosocial characteristics of telework.

Results A total of 612 teleworkers were included. The mean age was 33±6.9 years. Sex ratio (M/F) was 0.32. Teleworking had been practiced before the health confinement by