



History of Occupational Safety and Health

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EDITORIAL

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), also commonly referred to as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), industrial safety or occupational safety, is a multidisciplinary field concerned with the safety, health and well-being of people at work. These terms also relate to the purposes of this field, so for the purposes of this article, their use was originally an abbreviation of occupational health and safety program/department, etc. The purpose of an occupational health and safety program is to promote a healthy work environment. Occupational health and safety also protects the general public who may be affected by the work environment. Worldwide, more than 2.78 million people die each year from work related accidents or illnesses, the equivalent of one death every 15 seconds. 374 million additional non-fatal work accidents occur every year. The economic burden of work related injuries and fatalities is estimated to be nearly 4% of global gross domestic product each year. In common law jurisdictions, employers have a common law duty (also known as a duty of care) to take reasonable care of the safety of their employees. The law may also impose other general obligations, introduce special obligations and create public bodies with powers to regulate occupational safety matters; details on this vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Occupational physicians come from a variety of disciplines and professions, including medicine, psychology, epidemiology, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, occupational therapy, occupational medicine, human factors and ergonomics and many more. Experts advise on a wide range of occupational health issues. These include avoiding certain pre-existing conditions that cause a problem at work, good posture for work, frequency of breaks, possible preventative measures, etc. The quality of safety at work is characterized by the key figures which are the rate of

accidents at work, the average number of days of incapacity for work per employer, the satisfaction of employees vis-à-vis their working conditions and employee motivation to work safely. The protection of workers in their employment against risks resulting from factors prejudicial to their health, the accommodation and maintenance of workers in a working environment appropriate to their physiological and psychological capacities and, in short, the adaptation of work to people and to each man to his activity. Given the strong societal demand for occupational health and safety precautions based on reliable information, Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) professionals should find their roots in evidence-based practice. A new term is “evidence based decision making”. A working definition of evidence based practice might be: Evidence based practice is the use of evidence from the literature and other evidence based sources to formulate advice and make decisions that promote the health, safety, well-being and employability of workers. Therefore, factual information must be integrated with professional expertise and worker values. Contextual factors must be taken into account in terms of legislation, culture, financial and technical capacities. Ethical considerations must be taken into consideration. Farm workers are often at risk for work related injuries, lung disease, noise induced hearing loss, skin diseases and some cancers related to chemical use or prolonged exposure to the sun. On industrialized farms, injuries are often caused by the use of agricultural machinery. The most common cause of fatal injuries in agriculture in the United States is tractor rollover, which can be prevented by using rollover protection devices that reduce the risk. Pesticides and other chemicals used in agriculture can also be hazardous to workers' health and workers exposed to pesticides can develop disease or birth defects. As an industry where families, including children, work alongside their families, agriculture is a common source of workplace injuries

Received:	31-January-2023	Manuscript No:	IPQPC-22-14129
Editor assigned:	02-February-2023	PreQC No:	IPQPC-22-14129 (PQ)
Reviewed:	16-February-2023	QC No:	IPQPC-22-14129
Revised:	21-February-2023	Manuscript No:	IPQPC-22-14129 (R)
Published:	28-February-2023	DOI:	10.36648/1479-1064.23.31.03

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Citation: Seth V (2023) History of Occupational Safety and Health. Qual Prim Care. 31:03.

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and occupational diseases among young workers. Common causes of fatal injuries among young agricultural workers include drowning, machinery and motor vehicle accidents.