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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers and Friends of IJOMEH,
welcome to the issue No. 5.

I would like to encourage everybody to read this extensive number which includes 20 articles.

The section of original papers is opened by B. Pepłońska et al., our colleagues from the Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine (Poland). The study on associations between night shift work and lifestyle factors confirmed lower exercising among night shift workers and a tendency to increasing body weight, therefore any initiatives promoting physical activity are recommended.

S.J. Mirmohammadi et al. (Iran) have assessed changes in fractional inhaled NO (FeNO) during a work shift in cotton textile workers and their respiratory complaints. The FeNO increase after a work shift along with pulmonary function decrement and higher post-shift FeNO among subjects with respiratory complaints were found.

P. Wallner et al. (Austria) put forward a question concerning whether the worldwide associations between air quality and health end-points are meaningful; they conclude that a careful and professional approach is needed as interpretation of worldwide data is difficult, especially for lay persons. Thus, with publicly available data, WHO should also provide some guidance.

The next paper by V. Sansone et al. (Italy) is devoted to shoulder pain in women performing repetitive work. The study showed more frequent complaints for shoulder pain in supermarket cashiers, however they were not correlated with a higher prevalence of imaging abnormalities.

Sickness presence, sick leave and adjustment latitude were analyzed by J. Gerich (Austria). A high level of adjustment latitude in employees was found to be associated with a reduced number of days of sickness absence and sickness presence, but an elevated propensity for sickness absence was also noted in case of illness.

A. Różańska et al. (Poland) presents a 5-year observation of healthcare workers' occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens. Most cases were identified in nurses, mainly caused by needlestick injuries, and there was no upward or downward trend in the number of reported cases of exposure to bloodborne pathogens in the studied period.

A survey of the prevalence of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection among barbers and their knowledge and attitude are discussed by I.N. Abbasi et al. (Pakistan and USA). The study revealed lower prevalence of HBV in barbers (2.1%), compared to the national figures for the general population, as well as their poor knowledge on HBV.

Another survey of prevalence, namely of human hantavirus infections among forestry workers, was conducted by M. Oldal et al. (Hungary). Geographic differences in seroprevalence of pathogenic hantaviruses within the country were found, indicating elevated exposure to infections in some areas.

A. Gaszyńska et al. (Poland) devoted their attention to current oral health behaviors and the trends among 35–44-year-old Poles during the last 30 years. Despite a noticeable improvement, poor oral health behaviors were observed in 30–40% of the adults; only 60% visited a dentist at least once a year and every 3rd person had not done it for longer than 2.5 years, primarily due to negligence or financial reasons. The number of people brushing their teeth at least twice a day increased by more than 10% in the analyzed period.

Pneumoconiosis and respiratory problems in dental technicians are brought up by D. Ergün et al. (Turkey). The disease rate turned out to be 10.1% among 893 examined subjects. It was most common in males and those exposed to sandblasting, who had 77-fold higher risk.

The next paper by M. Lyapina et al. (Bulgaria) also concerns dental medicine, namely concomitant contact allergy to formaldehyde and methacrylic monomers (MMA, TEGDMA, EGDMA, Bis-GMA, 2-HEMA and tetrahydrofurfuryl methacrylate) in students of dentistry and dental patients. The study pointed out that the students of the 3rd and 4th year are put at risk of sensitization to MMA and TEGDMA and of cross-sensitization to MMA and formaldehyde, similarly to the group of patients.

The effects of oxidative stress (redox homeostasis) induced in rats by octabromodiphenyl ether (OctaBDE), a flame retardant used in production of plastics was studied by E. Bruchajzer et al. (Poland). The research showed that after repeated administration of OctaBDE at the lowest dose 0.4 mg/kg/day, the changes were observed in some parameters in the liver and blood serum indicative of oxidative stress.

K. Leszczyński (Poland) has measured the concentration of carbon monoxide in the breathing areas of workers during logging operations at the motor-manual level. Direct dosimetry and moving block bootstrap methods proved that the risk increases along with the conditions which generate the concentration of exhaust produced by 2-stroke petrol chainsaw engines.

The investigations performed by A. Kamal and A. Rashid (Pakistan) are focused on the evaluation of benzene exposure among auto-repair workers. Spray painters turned out to be put at high risk, hence to mitigate such workplace exposure it is necessary to reduce the working hours and to encourage the use of self-protective equipment and ventilation.

A.M. Suleiman and K.V.H. Svendsen (Norway) have checked the usefulness and clarity of information in safety data sheets (SDS) for cleaning products. They came to a conclusion, based on the review of 320 SDS, that the sheets are ambiguous; inadequate information and risk assessment concerning the products can lead to workers being exposed to hazardous chemicals.

The work environment contamination by particles in 2 waste-sorting units is characterized by S. Viegas et al. (Portugal). The measurements carried out by them confirmed the exposure of workers to particles of which higher concentration values were obtained in the smallest fraction.

The relationship between daily physical activity (PA) and low back pain (LBP) in young female desk-job workers was examined by G. Kayihan (Turkey) using disability index and questionnaire for assessment of LBP and PA consecutively. The main finding was a U-shaped relationship between PA and LBP disability score. In order to manage LBP, moderate daily physical activity and preventing body weight and fat gain are recommended.

Following the section of original papers, there are 2 short communications.

The first one by V. Pravettoni et al. (Italy) refers to severe asthma attacks after handling shiitake mushrooms (SM), the disease more frequently occurring in Asia and poorly known in Europe. The positive skin tests with SM and IgE-binding components in the shiitake extract proved the IgE-mediated pathogenesis of asthma.

The next short communication submitted by C.I. Vardavas et al. (USA and Greece) deals with second hand smoke exposure (SHS) within semi-open air cafes and tobacco specific carcinogen concentrations among nonsmoking employees. The findings indicate that the commonly proposed practice of maintaining open sliding walls as a means of free air exchange does not lead to the elimination of employee exposure to tobacco specific carcinogens attributable to workplace SHS.

This issue comes to an end with the case report by Z. Yuanhai et al. (China) who describe the unusual para-chloronitrobenzene (p-CNB) poisoning with severe methaemoglobinaemia caused by absorption of p-CNB through burn wounds.

We wish you a good time reading *in extenso* this interesting issue.

Prof. Wiesław J. Sułkowski
on behalf of the Editorial Board