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South East Asian Ergonomics Conference to be held in Singapore from 1 – 4 December 2014





**31st International Congress
on Occupational Health**
May 31 ~ June 5, 2015 Seoul, Korea

Articles Reviewed In This Issue:

1. **The asbestos lie. The past and present of an industrial catastrophe**
2. **Leading indicators of construction safety performance**
3. **Workplace Stress in the United States**
4. **Occupational and environmental heat-associated deaths in Maricopa County, Arizona: A case-control study**

1. Title: The asbestos lie. The past and present of an industrial catastrophe

Date of publication: 2014

Source: European Trade Union Institute

Author: Maria Roselli

Synopsis:

In Europe alone, it has been estimated that 500,000 people will die of asbestos-related cancer by 2030. This is despite its ban in the European Union (EU) for a number of years as asbestos-related cancers have long latency periods. Nonetheless, asbestos is still the main source of toxic danger to workers and causes the majority of occupational cancers worldwide. Switzerland, in particular, was one of the heaviest users of asbestos per capita. This book gives a history of the Swiss asbestos cement company Eternit, and the strategy the company developed together with other asbestos companies to prevent the outlawing of asbestos until 1999. It also describes the ill-effects, such as asbestosis, asbestos-related lung cancer and mesothelioma and discusses legal actions taken against the company, as well as the associated health-related problems.

To read more, click [here](#)

2. Title: Leading indicators of construction safety performance

Date of publication: January 2013

Source: Safety Science 51 (2013) 23–28

Author: Jimmie Hinze, Samuel Thurman, Andrew Wehle

Synopsis:

“Leading indicators of construction safety performance are measures of the safety process as it applies to construction work, while lagging indicators pertain to the safety results, namely the extent of the occurrence of worker injuries.” These indicators comprise both passive and active measures. Passive ones are: number or percentage of subcontractors selected partly based on satisfying specific safety criterion before being awarded the subcontract; requiring each subcontractor to submit a pre-approved site-specific safety programme before the subcontractor can commence work; and requiring each contracting company’s CEO to provide a letter indicating the subcontractor’s commitment to construction workers’ safety. Active leading indicators include: percentage of job site toolbox meetings and pre-task planning attended by job site supervisors/managers; percentage of negative random drug test results; number of near accidents reported per 200,000 hours of work exposure; percentage of safety compliance on job site safety audits (inspections); and aggressive promotion of job site safety by senior management.

To read more, click [here](#) *[Access via publisher's website]*

3. Title: Workplace Stress in the United States

Date of publication: July 2014

Source: OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 1150, OECD Publishing

Author: Michael Darden

Synopsis:

Workplace stress is a prominent feature of the labour scene in the United States. It causes poor health outcomes directly and indirectly. A survey by the American Institute for Stress reports that 35% of workers said their jobs are hurting their physical and emotional health. 80% of workers feel stress on the job and nearly 50% indicate that they need help in learning how to manage stress, while 42% indicate that their colleagues need such help. Hence, it is appropriate to have policies that lessen job stress. Apart from providing a definition of the term ‘job strain’, the author explores how scientists in medicine, epidemiology and economics have characterised the effects of job strain on health; and implications of poor mental health in the form of increased absenteeism, job loss and decreased productivity. It also discusses policy measures that may address job stress.

To read more, click [here](#)

4. Title: Occupational and environmental heat-associated deaths in Maricopa County, Arizona: A case-control study

Date of publication: May 2013

Source: PLOS ONE Volume 8, Issue 5, e62596

Author: Diana B. Petitti, Sharon L. Harlan, Gerardo Chowell-Puente, Darren Ruddell

Synopsis:

Research has shown that workers in the construction/extraction and agriculture are at higher risk of death associated with environmental heat. In particular, men aged 65 years or older in agricultural occupations are at higher risk of heat-associated death. In addition, the death rate among older workers is higher vis-à-vis their younger counterparts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines sustained periods of hot weather as “those with daytime temperatures of 105 or more degrees Fahrenheit (40.6 degrees Centigrade) and a night time minimum temperature of 80 or more degrees Fahrenheit (26.7 degrees Centigrade) persisting for at least 48 hours.” In this regard, in 2005, California required employers to provide fresh water for workers and encourage them to drink frequently; provide access to shade and encourage employees to take a five-minute cool-down rest in the shade; provide employees and supervisors with heat-related illness training; and develop and implement written procedures for complying with the heat illness prevention standard. The laws were further strengthened in 2010 when employers from the agricultural, construction, landscaping, oil and gas and transportation/delivery of agricultural produce were required to implement other specific procedures when temperatures reach 95 degrees Fahrenheit. They were required to: ensure effective communication so employees could contact employers when necessary; observe employees for alertness and signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses; remind employees to drink plenty of water while working; and closely supervise a new employee during the first 14 days of employment.

To read more, click [here](#)

Other Useful Resources:

- [Eliminating the Controversy Over Safety Incentive Programs](#) (Occupational Health & Safety)
- [Heat Illness and Death Among Workers — United States, 2012–2013](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [The fatal dangers of working in the recycling industry](#) (spring-summer 2014/HesaMag #09)

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