

Workplace awareness and occupational health problems in Pharma Industries (Related to Pharmaceutical Industry and Pharmacognosy Industry)

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Introduction: India is a major hub of Pharma Industry (Formulations, API and Pharmacognosy related Industries) and has large number of US-FDA approved manufacturing units. All methods of production and manufacturing including extraction of natural ingredients from plant and animal kingdom have occupational health problems. We have examined the awareness and prevalence of these problems.

Methods: 147 subjects of both sexes (males: 93, females: 54) aged between 26-52 years came for treatment for their medical problems, were studied. They answered a pre-tested questionnaire involving their level of subjective symptoms, musculoskeletal pains, ergonomics knowledge and knowledge of their industrial hazards. People from manufacturing, administration and marketing volunteered for the study.

Results: 9% suffered headache, 24% suffered tiredness, 12% felt exhausted, 42% had back pain, 26% had shoulder and neck pain, 16% suffered recurrent upper respiratory problems; manufacturing employees suffered significantly ($p < 0.005$) than others. 89% had no idea of ergonomics, 67% didn't know posture care and 13% were ignorant about safety measures and safety equipment. 87% do not exercise regularly, 32% frequently changed their eating habits and 29% had dependencies due to work related stress (confessed).

Discussion: lack of awareness on standing, lifting and machine handling ergonomics has probably led to more musculoskeletal pains, prolonged working hours and job dead lines were responsible for subjective symptoms. Poor knowledge and attitude over safety measures and lifestyle factors are responsible for many problems.

Conclusion: The technology and production demands are going hand in hand. This simple study indicates that these employees suffer from many occupational health problems and there is a need to have interventions to improve their workplace awareness and preventive attitude.