

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS RELATED TO ANAESTHETISTS

J.M.H. Kumara

Postgraduate Institute of Science, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

The aims of this study were to assess whether there is a significant difference in the prevalence of occupational hazards between doctors in the field of anaesthesia and doctors not working in the field of anaesthesia, to identify most common occupational hazards related to anaesthesia, assess the knowledge regarding chronic exposure to occupational hazards among professionals and suggest preventive methods to minimize occupational hazards related to anaesthetists. The study was carried out by using a self administered questionnaire in Teaching Hospitals, District General Hospitals and Base Hospitals of the Central Province, Sri Lanka. Data was analysed by Mann Whitney U test, Chi-square and Factor analysis. Data was analysed by using Minitab 15 version, Microsoft Excel 2007 and SPSS13.0 statistical packages.

There was a significant increase in prevalence of needle prick injury ($P=0.02$) exposure to waste anaesthetic gases, exposure to X-ray ($P=0.0001$), sleep disturbances ($P=0.0001$) latex allergy ($P=0.003$), spontaneous abortions ($P=0.0001$) and infections ($P=0.02$) in Doctors working in the field of anaesthesia.

Doctors working in the field of anaesthesia are having risk factors such as disease exposure, exposure to waste anaesthetic gases, X-ray, diathermy, MRI, continuous working, sleep disturbances and unpleasant working environment. These risk factors are higher among the doctors in the field of anaesthesia compared to the Doctors not in the field of anaesthesia. Common occupational hazards affecting doctors working in the field of anaesthesia are exposure to needle prick injuries, Exposure to X-rays and diathermy and laser smoke. Main impacts of exposure to occupational hazards in doctors working in the field of anaesthesia are being stressed and anxious, alcohol abuse and having conflicts in family life. There is a positive relationship between these effects. The knowledge on occupational hazards of anaesthesia is significantly higher in doctors working in the field of anaesthesia. Some suggestions to reduce the occupational hazards in the field of anaesthesia are reducing the work load, usage of standard machinery, practising universal precautions, ensuring adequate staff and promoting awareness and education regarding hazards.