

Setting Priorities: Can JHSCs assess workplace chemicals?

Thomas Tenkate and Desre Kramer
Ryerson University

Presentation to CUPE, 17 October, 2018

Health & Safety and Injured Workers Conference 2018. Windsor, Ontario

Research Question?

Can JHSCs from small to medium-sized workplaces Identify, Assess, and Prioritize their workplace's chemicals?

Why is collecting info on chemicals important?

- No systematic collection of workplace exposures since 1991
- No idea what exposures are being used presently
- Cancer is a very unexplored area of occupational health and safety
- Little attention has been paid to the long-term health effects of chemical exposure
- Big Picture of creating surveillance of chemicals used in workplaces

Who should be collecting this information?

Workplaces have to be the ones to collect this information

We have tried to persuade doctors and nurses to collect this information

Why should workers know their exposure history?

- Changes: career, industry, company, province
- Companies with records do not make them public
- Important to have a record because of the 20-30 year latency
- More fatalities from occ disease than from injuries and accidents
- A clear picture of causality helps with diagnosis and treatment

Setting Priorities: JHSC assess chemicals in their workplaces

- Funded by the Ontario MOL
- 5 unions and 3 health and safety associations
- Need 8-10 small to medium workplaces
- Workplaces must have JHSCs and be unionized

Which workplaces?

1. Workplaces come from any industry
2. Small to medium (20-100 workers), or a department with its own JHSC.
3. Workplaces are using chemicals
4. Focus is on chemicals and not biological or infectious hazards

Research Milestones

June to December

Recruiting workplaces (have 2)

Develop Exposure Survey and Training

October to February

Baseline-interviews with the JHSC

January to March

Training the JHSCs

JHSC conduct survey

Follow up interviews

Report to workplaces

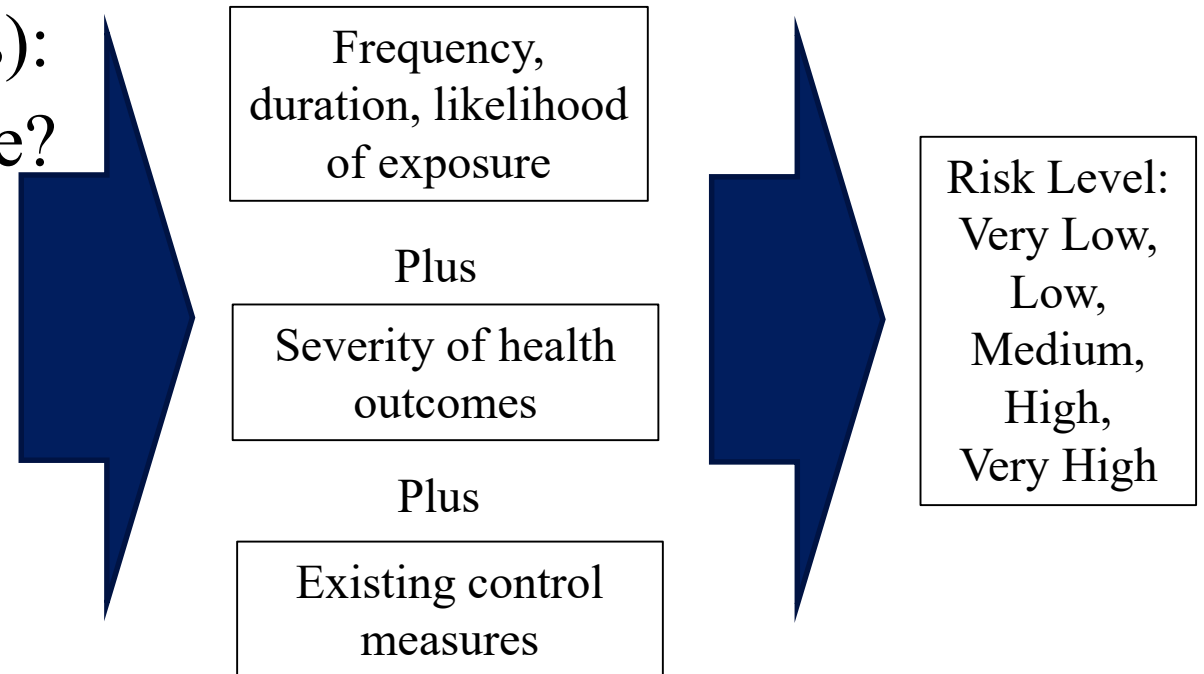
Draft Chemical Risk Assessment Tool (Thomas Tenkate)

- The existing tools are very complicated
- Especially difficult for small and medium-sized companies
- Important to develop the hazard assessment tool together with Unions

- Goal is to make it accessible

Draft Chemical Risk Assessment Tool

- Want to know (10 chemicals, 10 steps):
 - What chemicals are in the workplace?
 - How much is present/used?
 - What form are they in?
 - How are they used?
 - What are they used for?



THIS IS NOT AN EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT (we are NOT looking at compliance with exposure standards)

Building on WHMIS 2015

Recruiting workplaces

- What are some key messages that can be given to management to get involved in this study?
 - Due diligence is protection from liability (legal)
 - Progressive workplace (sectoral)
 - Employees come first (ethical)

Long term goals (Desre Kramer)

- Develop the assessment tool into an APP
- Chemical exposure surveillance system