



The 131st Annual Meeting (November 15-19, 2003) of APHA

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Abstract #55434

Hmong children as farm workers in Minnesota: Hazards, tasks, and safe work practices

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Child safety guidelines have been created for traditional North American farming families. The purpose of this project was to explore how health and safety materials can be adapted for ethnic communities.

The specific aims were to 1) examine the extent and nature of child agricultural labor in Hmong farm families in Minnesota; 2) investigate culture-specific health behavior patterns and culturally appropriate health promotion methods for Hmong farm families; and 3) analyze current child work guidelines for applicability and appropriateness for Hmong farming families.

Methods: Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used, including extensive literature review, review of secondary data, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, field observations, and height and weight measurements.

Data Analysis: Text narratives, field notes, and photographs were synthesized and contextualized by the research team and entered into Atlas.ti, software used to manage and organize qualitative data; numerical data was analyzed with SPSS.

Results: Hmong farm children have different work tasks, roles, and responsibilities compared to other North American farm children. Hmong children perform tasks in four time-related phases: preharvest, harvest, postharvest, and at the market. Tasks differ in each phase and by age and gender. In families we observed, girls work longer hours and carry heavier loads than boys of the same age.

Discussion: Standard health and safety materials are not widely accepted by Minnesota Hmong farmers. Participants in this project helped develop culturally appropriate and relevant materials for Hmong farm parents and children. These materials and the development process will be presented and discussed.

Learning Objectives:

Learning objectives: At the end of this session the participant will be able to:

- Identify three cultural, linguistic, or historical challenges associated with safety and health promotion projects with the Hmong agricultural community in Minnesota.
- List three hazards associated with two common work tasks performed by Hmong children.
- Recognize the importance of collecting qualitative, contextual data in order to design the most responsive and culturally competent solutions.

Keywords: Agricultural Work Safety, Child/Adolescent

Related Web page: safety.coafes.umn.edu/hmong/

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

I do not have any significant financial interest/arrangement or affiliation with any organization/institution whose products or services are being discussed in this session.

Young Workers: Cross-Cultural Issues

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