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Health Hazard Educational Products for Workers in Agriculture

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Workers in agriculture are exposed to many outdoor health hazards that depend on their type of work, geographic region, season, and duration of time they are outside. The Education and Information Division (EID) of NIOSH is developing educational materials for employers and workers about these health hazards in collaboration with scientists internal and external to NIOSH. The goal of these educational products is to provide materials for agricultural workers on hazards they may be exposed to while on the job. These products describe each physical, biological, or chemical hazard and provide steps for prevention and basic first aid recommendations. In addition, these products provide portable, accessible, and easy-to-use information about individual worker hazards. Current and future NIOSH electronic and print products for workers in agriculture include Workplace Solutions, web topic pages, and NIOSH Fast Facts cards. Product topics currently in development include: tick-borne diseases, mosquito-borne diseases, poisonous plants, venomous snakes, venomous spiders, stinging insects, heat stress, cold stress, and sun exposure (ultraviolet radiation). NIOSH/EID is interested in partnering with other researchers to develop additional educational products about health hazards to workers in agriculture.

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Community Collaborations for Agricultural Health - Applications in the Northeast

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The Northeast Center for Agricultural Health's (NEC) community-based partnerships are addressing important health and safety issues in diverse agricultural populations at several sites across the northeast. A project with Maine blueberry harvesters led to widespread use of a more efficient, ergonomically superior harvesting rake. A project in New York addressed eye irritation and is currently focusing upon musculoskeletal injuries. Another NY project aims to reduce child injuries in a Mennonite population. Through the evaluation process of these NEC community-based projects, similar themes appeared, strengths and weaknesses were identified and important lessons learned for better project development. This presentation will emphasize the lessons learned in the partnership with the University of Connecticut's Migrant Farmworkers Clinic seeking to reduce skin and eye irritation among shade tobacco workers. Input from the community (farmworkers, employers, and farmworker advocates) guided the selection of the target health problem, the modes of intervention and the evaluation measures. Two interventions were implemented to improve access to water/hand washing and hygiene: the workers were invited to attend hygiene trainings and the growers were encouraged to place more hand washing facilities with soap and towels in the fields. Evaluation results demonstrate high acceptance of the intervention by the workers and modifications by employers to assure high rates of compliance. The community-based approach presents a number of challenges but assures projects relevant to the community and ultimately feasible for dissemination.

Disclaimer: This poster has not been presented previously. Some of these data have been presented orally at the recent American Public Health Association Annual Meeting.

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Economics of Preventing Agricultural Injuries to Adolescent and Adult Farm Workers: Surveillance, Exposure and Intervention Effectiveness Data that Supports an Intervention Model for Teachers as Safety Advocates in Rural Schools

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This poster will display results from three years of demographic and pre-post data on attitudinal, knowledge and behavioral intention measures obtained from pre-career professionals trained (i.e. student teachers) in the use of narrative simulations and cost tools (N = 418 intervention group/387 control group). These educational interventions are designed for use with high school students aged 15–19 who are at the highest risk for farm injury and fatalities in four injury categories: crush injuries from tractor overturns, closed head injuries from ATV and horseback riding incidents, motor vehicle/equipment collision and noise-induced hearing loss. Demographic data show that many pre-career professionals have experiences with such injuries regardless of whether or not they have lived or worked on farms. These experiences prove to be motivating factors in engaging teachers as agricultural safety advocates. Also pre-post data show that there is a significant improvement in knowledge about these injuries, how to prevent them and the individual and social costs of these incidents. Thus informed, these teachers' increased awareness informs a sense of responsibility as change agents in the rural communities in which they work. In follow up interviews, program participants are using these materials and acting as agricultural safety advocates in the rural schools in which they have obtained teaching positions. In addition, the research poster presentation will include an R2P transdisciplinary model for educational intervention to