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Work-related asthma in the educational services industry-California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey, 1993-2000

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We examined 2,942 work-related asthma (WRA) cases identified by California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New Jersey during 1993–2000 to characterize potential exposures and occupations within the educational services industry (Standard Industrial Classification = 82). A total of 265 (9%) WRA cases in the educational services industry were identified. Of those with sufficient information, using a standard case definition and classification scheme, 182 (69%) cases were classified as new-onset and 82 (31%) as work-aggravated. Twenty (8%) were classified as reactive airways dysfunction syndrome (RADS) and 162 (61%) as occupational asthma. For 145 (55%) cases the exposure has not been documented as a known allergen. The largest occupational group was teachers and teachers' aides (54%), followed by administrative staff (16%), and janitors, cleaners, and housekeepers (12%). Reports from elementary and secondary schools accounted for nearly 75% of all cases. The most frequently reported agents were indoor air pollutants (28%), cleaning products (19%), mold (18%), and mineral and inorganic dusts (18%). The number of WRA cases among teachers and reported from elementary and secondary schools indicate that asthma in educational settings is an occupational health problem. Workers in this industry are primarily public sector employees, and in half of the states Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provisions do not apply. Initiatives addressing asthma in schools should include employees. The identification, control, and/or elimination of exposures are important for the protection of staff and students alike.

Learning Objectives:

- ε Identify the top three occupations within the educational services industry associated with work-related asthma
- ε List the most frequently reported exposures associated with cases of work-related asthma within

the educational services industry

ε Understand that incentives addressing asthma in schools should include students and staff alike.

Keywords: Surveillance, Indoor Environment

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

I wish to disclose that I have **NO** financial interests or other relationship with the manufactures of commercial products, suppliers of commercial services or commercial supporters.

[Occupational Respiratory Disease: Surveillance and Solutions](#)

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