



Workshop on Airways Disease and Occupational Exposure to Particulates Not Otherwise Classified/Regulated

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Workshop on Airways Disease and Occupational Exposure to Particulates Not Otherwise Classified/Regulated

Reported by Katherine Kirkland

I. Workshop Background

Katherine H. Kirkland, MPH, Tee Guidotti, MD, MPH, John Parker, MD, Robert M. Castellan, MD, MPH, Workshop Planning Committee

II. Workgroup I: *Attribution of Chronic Airways Disease to Occupational Dust Exposures: Recommended Clinical Guidance* Tee Guidotti, MD, MPH, Workgroup Rapporteur

III. Workgroup II: *Prevention of Chronic Airways Disease Associated with Occupational Dust Exposure: Recommended Occupational Health Guidance for Prevention*

David H. Wegman, MD, MSc, Workgroup Rapporteur

IV. Workgroup III: *Key Gaps in Knowledge About the Role of PNOC/R in the Etiology of Chronic Airways Disease: Recommended Future Research*

Robert McCunney, MD, Workgroup Rapporteur

Workshop Background

In October 1996 the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) cosponsored an invited workshop on particulates not otherwise classified/regulated (PNOC/R). As a basis for defining PNOC/R, and with the understanding that PNOC/R are those particulates without specific federal permissible exposure limits, the workshop used the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists' definition:

Particulates Not Otherwise Classified (PNOC). There are many substances on the TLV[®] list, and many more that are not on the list, for which there is no evidence of specific toxic effects. Those that are particulates have frequently been called "nuisance dusts." Although these materials may not cause fibrosis or systemic effects, they are not biologically inert. . . . Accordingly, the Chemical Substances TLV Committee recommends the use of the term "Particulates Not Otherwise Classified (PNOC)" to emphasize that all materials are potentially toxic and to avoid the implication that these materials are harmless. . . .⁽¹⁾

The workshop was convened to focus on three primary issues. These were: (1) Attribution of Chronic Airways Disease to

Occupational Dust Exposures: Recommended Clinical Guidance; (2) Prevention of Chronic Airways Disease Associated with Occupational Dust Exposure: Recommended Occupational Health Guidance for Prevention; and (3) Key Gaps in Knowledge About the Role of PNOC/R in the Etiology of Chronic Airways Disease: Recommended Future Research.

This workshop's objectives were designed to help forward the implementation of several priority areas set forth in the recent NIOSH *National Occupational Research Agenda*⁽²⁾ (NORA). These priority areas include: asthma and chronic obstructive disease from the NORA section on disease and injury; indoor environment, mixed exposures, and special populations at risk from the work environment and workforce category; and several priority areas listed in the research tools and approaches category.

The workshop participants were selected to provide a broad spectrum of expertise in the area of particulate-induced lung disease as well as professional diversity. Participants included epidemiologists, physicians, toxicologists, and industrial hygienists (see Attachment 1). The workshop began with a keynote address by Margaret Becklake, MD, and continued the first afternoon with a series of talks designed to clarify the issues to be addressed and set forth what is known (see Attachment 2).

For the morning session of day two, participants were divided into three groups, each of which discussed the three primary issues of the workshop. All groups were asked to consider several basic questions: What do we currently know? What can we do with that knowledge? What do we need to know? and Who is currently doing the research needed, or who can provide the research needed? During the afternoon session, each group then presented the outcome of their group deliberations to the entire workshop and invited comments. A summary of these workgroup presentations, revised to reflect workshop discussion stimulated by comments made on the afternoon of day two, follows.

References

1. American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists: 1995-1996 Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents and Biological Exposure Indices (BEIs). ACGIH, Cincinnati, OH (1997).
2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: National Occupational Research Agenda. DHHS (NIOSH) Pub. No. 96-115. NIOSH, Cincinnati, OH (1996).

Sponsored by the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, October 7-8, 1996, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania