

Results: The results show that a situation of potential risk does exist in slate caving and manufacturing, with particular regard for some specific duties.

Conclusions: The present investigation suggests the need for a greater attention to Health and Safety procedures and for the establishment of specific training programmes for slate workers in the area of Nabuona. Moreover, it shows the need for a dedicated control of the environmental dust conditions.

355 Silicosis among gold miners in Ecuador: a present problem

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Background. Silicosis is well recognized as an occupational disease all over the world. In Ecuador, only a few reports about silicosis have been known, in most cases related to a low

number of miners compensated or to some workers in quarries.

Subjects and Methods: Two hundred and sixty gold miners heavily exposed to silica dust have been studied with PRODEMINCA (Programa de Desarrollo Minero y Control Ambiental-Ministerio de Energía Minas del Ecuador) support, in four mining areas in the south of Ecuador. Dust was tested to verify SiO₂ content and total and respirable dust was measured in some spot samples. Miners perform different activities such as drilling, transportation and milling. A standardized questionnaire was used and chest X-ray and lung function tests were performed on all of them.

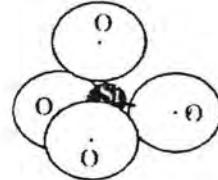
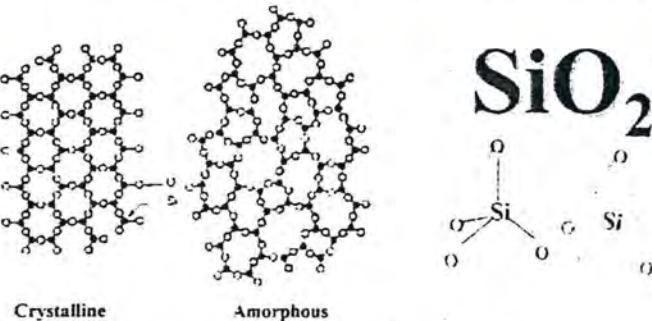
Results: A Prevalence Rate=10.76 of silicosis was reported among this group. Spirometry did not show changes associated with silicosis, although there were sub-groups with FEV₁, CV and Tiffeneau indicating obstructive lung diseases.

Conclusions: Implementation of preventive measures is suggested to avoid the presence of silicosis among gold miners in Ecuador.

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