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Prevention and Wellness Across the Life Span

APHA 140TH ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO
OCT 27-31, 2012 SAN FRANCISCO, CA



Infancy



Teen Years



Retirement

267518 Assessing Agricultural Safety and Health among Hmong Farmers in Washington State

Monday, October 29, 2012 : 2:30 PM - 2:50 PM

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Background/Objectives: Refugees in the United States are increasingly engaging in farming activities. Refugee farmworkers may be susceptible to disparate rates of agricultural-related injuries because they are farming in new environments with limited training on safety hazards. Assessing safety and health is critical to understanding challenges that refugee farmers face. Hmong refugees have established farms in Washington and their farming practices are representative of emerging refugee farmers in the region. The project objectives are to compare participatory approaches to conventional industrial hygiene methods to characterize safety and health issues encountered by Hmong refugee farmers, identify priority agricultural hazards, and describe 'best practices' which reduce exposure to agricultural hazards. **Methods:** We will combine participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and photovoice to obtain information on perceived agricultural safety and health issues. PRA is an approach which employs participant-generated maps, seasonal calendars, and stories to facilitate self-discovery of problems and solutions. Photovoice utilizes participant-taken photographs to identify hazards and best practices. We will compare information from these approaches to conventional industrial hygiene methods. A comprehensive checklist will be developed, and trained researchers will conduct systematic assessments of working conditions and farming practices throughout the growing season. **Results:** Preliminary data on agriculture safety hazards and 'best practices' will be presented, along with a comparison of participatory approaches and conventional industrial hygiene methods. **Conclusions:** Current Hmong farming practices are representative of emerging refugee farmers, and hazards and 'best practices' identified in this study will guide the development of training materials for both Hmong and emerging refugee farmers.

Learning Areas:

Assessment of individual and community needs for health education
Occupational health and safety
Planning of health education strategies, interventions, and programs

Learning Objectives:

1) Compare participatory approaches to conventional industrial hygiene methods to characterize safety and health issues encountered by Hmong refugee farmers 2) Identify priority agricultural hazards 3) Describe 'best practices' which reduce exposure to agricultural hazards

Keywords: Agricultural Work Safety, Refugees

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

Qualified on the content I am responsible for because: I am a research scientist with the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (PNASH), based at the University of Washington. I have been working on various agricultural safety and health projects since I started as a graduate student with PNASH in 2008. My interests include safety and health of vulnerable populations, sustainable agriculture, and preventing industrial exposures.

Any relevant financial relationships? No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.

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