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## American Public Health Association

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230037 Understanding chemical exposures to environmentally preferable cleaning products (EPP) and the health of vulnerable worker populations

**Monday, November 8, 2010 : 8:45 AM - 9:00 AM**

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The formulation of cleaning products is transforming rapidly as new environmentally preferable (EPP) chemical ingredients are taking the place of traditional chemicals. There are no studies in the literature that have characterized custodians' exposure to cleaning chemicals as they transition from traditional cleaning chemicals to EPPs. The University of Connecticut Health Center is partnering with custodians from the Connecticut Employees Union Independent (CEUI-SEIU) in a participatory research model to investigate the use and health impact of EPPs and disinfectants across five large state institutions. One of the primary goals is to collect information to better understand this transition, especially for vulnerable worker populations. Thirty to forty percent of custodians working at one institution speak Polish, and twenty-five percent at two other institutions speak Spanish. We will present results from eight focus groups, including three with Polish or Spanish-speaking workers, in relation to the perceptions of custodians regarding their use of cleaning chemicals, their health, and obstacles and incentives related to transitioning to EPPs, including issues specific to vulnerable workers. Focus groups will be digitally recorded, transcribed by a professional service, imported into ATLAS T1, reviewed for accuracy by the focus group leader, and coded for primary themes and syntax. This additional level of understanding will help guide planning, design and implementation of interventions aimed to improve the health of custodians.

#### Learning Areas:

Occupational health and safety

#### Learning Objectives:

To describe the results from eight focus groups, including three with Polish or Spanish-speaking workers, in relation to the perceptions of custodians regarding their use of cleaning chemicals, their health, and obstacles and incentives related to transitioning to EPPs, including issues specific to vulnerable workers.

#### Presenting author's disclosure statement:

**Qualified on the content I am responsible for because:** I am a research industrial hygienist in an occupational medicine clinic. I am the project manager of a community-based participatory research study that involves a partnership with custodians who work with green cleaning chemicals across five state institutions. I have a M.S. degree from the University of Washington.

**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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