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NIOSH eNews – August 2010

Volume 8 Number 4 August 2010

From the Director's Desk

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August eNews 2010

NIOSH Morgantown: Then and Now

In the upcoming months, I will be taking you on a tour of NIOSH that spans seven states. This month features the NIOSH facility located just south of the Mason Dixon Line in Morgantown, W.Va. The history of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in Morgantown encompasses over 40 years of community partnership and ongoing national leadership in preventing work-related illnesses and injuries.

Occupational safety and health research has deep roots in Morgantown. In 1967, the Appalachian Laboratory for Occupational Respiratory Diseases (ALFORD) was created within the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) to focus on a prominent problem of the Appalachian occupational environment—"black lung disease" in coal miners. ALFORD's director was Dr. W. Keith Morgan. ALFORD was initially housed in the West Virginia University (WVU) Health Sciences Center, and its research focused on detecting black lung disease and assessing its physiological effects. In 1969, work began on a new facility for ALFORD on 4.6 acres of land donated by WVU to PHS. In the same year, the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 (Coal Act) was passed. The Coal Act mandated a range of measures to protect coal miners, including limits on coal mine dust exposures and a program providing medical screening with chest radiographs to coal miners at operators' expense.

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After the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act was passed in 1970, ALFORD became part of NIOSH, which was created under the new legislation. ALFORD was assigned responsibilities found both in the OSH Act and the Coal Act, including responsibility for health hazard evaluations in mines and management of the Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program. ALFORD's new building was dedicated on November 27, 1971, with Senator Robert C. Byrd as the principal speaker. Senator Byrd continued to be an avid supporter of NIOSH research until his death in 2010. The evolution of NIOSH/Morgantown since that fall day in 1971 reflects his decades of tireless commitment to world-class research for worker safety and health. The new building was initially called the Appalachian Center for Occupational Safety and Health (ACOSH). Later in the decade, its name was changed to the Appalachian Laboratory for Occupational Safety and Health (ALOSH). An interesting note is that the cornerstone of this facility serves as a "time capsule" holding sections of diseased human lungs from black lung victims, along with copies of the OSH Act and copies of legislation related to black lung and coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP).

January 1975 brought a new director for NIOSH, Dr. John Finklea, and in August a new director of ALFORD, Dr. James Merchant. With these new appointments came a reorganization of NIOSH, with important impacts on ALOSH. In 1976, ALFORD became the Division of Respiratory Disease Studies (DRDS). Dr. Finklea closed NIOSH's Salt Lake City laboratory and transferred the Environmental Investigations Branch (EIB) from there to the newly formed DRDS, thus adding the discipline of industrial hygiene to DRDS. An expansion of DRDS research in areas other than black lung followed, with staff investigating other occupational respiratory diseases in other work settings, such as byssinosis in non-textile cotton workers, asbestos exposure in crushed stone quarries, exposures for cement workers, exposures to oxides of nitrogen, diesel emissions in coal mines, beryllium workers, and persons working with new energy technologies such as coal liquefaction, coal gasification, and refuse derived fuels.

In 1977, safety research activities in ALOSH were expanded, and the NIOSH Division of Safety Research (DSR) was created to serve as the focal point for the Nation's research program for preventing occupational injuries. The first DSR director was Mr. John Moran. The Testing and Certification Laboratory was organized in the new DSR and included respirator certification activities and research as specified in the Coal Act of 1969. Respirator certification and research were later moved to DRDS in 1996 and then incorporated into the NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory in Pittsburgh in 2001, reflecting an evolution toward addressing stakeholder needs.

In 1996, the NIOSH Morgantown facility expanded, and ALOSH opened a 167,000 square-foot state-of-the-art research facility that would house new safety engineering laboratories and the newly created Health Effects Laboratory Division (HELD). The first director of HELD was Dr. Albert Munson, who is still the director today. HELD was created to expand and update NIOSH's bench laboratory research capabilities and to recruit researchers who could make new scientific contributions in the area of occupational safety and health.

Today, the NIOSH facility sits on the original 4.6 acres of land just beside the West Virginia University medical campus. The name ALOSH is now rarely used, and the sign outside the facility says CDC/NIOSH. From a staff of 20 to meet a very specific need four decades ago, NIOSH/Morgantown has grown to approximately 600 employees reflecting a steady increase of responsibilities.

DSR continues to serve as the focal point for the Institute's traumatic occupational injury research program under its director, Dr. Nancy Stout. DSR's programs are organized around the public health approach to occupational injury prevention, including emphases on injury surveillance, epidemiology, intervention evaluation, and protective technology engineering. Specific programs include fire fighter fatality investigations and prevention, workplace violence prevention, falls prevention and protection, childhood agricultural injury prevention, and the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program. Technological advances over the last decade in DSR's state-of-the-art virtual reality laboratory are now providing researchers with the capability to develop more realistic simulation of workplace scenarios for cutting-edge engineering research on injury prevention technology.

DRDS continues to provide national and international leadership toward the identification, evaluation, and prevention of occupational respiratory diseases under its director, Dr. David Weissman. DRDS conducts research relevant to a wide range of occupational respiratory diseases including work-related asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, flavoring-related lung disease, chronic beryllium disease, and coal workers' pneumoconiosis. DRDS also conducts several activities mandated

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by federal regulations. These include health hazard evaluations with a focus on occupational respiratory diseases, the Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program, and the NIOSH Spirometry Course Certification Program. DRDS also continues to modify its research to meet changing needs. For example DRDS is currently leading the transition of medical radiographic screening for occupational respiratory diseases from older film-based technology to digital chest imaging and developing methods for using longitudinal measurement of pulmonary function with spirometry for early detection of occupational lung disease.

HELD continues to focus on establishing the causes of occupational disease and injury and to contribute to the development of valid strategies of intervention and prevention. Science disciplines are represented among branches of allergy and clinical immunology, biostatistics and epidemiology, exposure assessment, engineering and control technologies, pathology and physiology, and toxicology and molecular biology. HELD also continues to evolve and address changing needs in research. HELD uses research teams from its diverse scientific disciplines to work on emerging issues such as nanoparticle exposures or the potential threat of pandemic flu for health-care workers. To address complex questions about flu transmission, HELD bioengineers are using newly developed aerosol samplers and chambers with coughing and breathing machines, computer modelers are modeling how aerosols from coughs are generated and dispersed, and molecular biologists are using highly sensitive molecular techniques to detect and quantify virus in the air samples to validate the samplers and computer models. All of these combined are changing the understanding of the transmission of the virus in the healthcare setting.



A short video highlights just a few of the many research programs currently going on at NIOSH Morgantown. More detailed information on each division is also available at the following Web sites: DSR (</niosh/contact/im-dsr.html>), DRDS (</niosh/contact/im-drds.html>), and HELD (</niosh/contact/im-held.html>).

Deepwater Horizon Response Update

Procedures for Recruiting from NIOSH Roster

With the Deepwater Horizon response, NIOSH swiftly began to compile a roster of response workers so that they can be identified for possible subsequent health studies. On July 19, NIOSH posted a procedure that would be used in responding to requests from qualified researchers for recruiting volunteers from the roster for health studies. </niosh/topics/oilspillresponse/recruiting.html>

Interim Guidance on Preplacement Evaluation

On July 21, NIOSH posted interim guidance that provides health professionals with important elements of a preplacement evaluation for Deepwater Horizon response workers. This guidance lists conditions that may indicate a need for further medical attention or for work restrictions or modifications. This NIOSH interim guidance includes a section on medications, medical conditions, potential risk factors, and a physical examination. </niosh/topics/oilspillresponse/indicators.html>

Staying Safe in Extreme Heat Conditions...NIOSH Resources Provide Help

NIOSH wants to help you stay safe while working in extreme heat conditions-preventing, recognizing, and responding promptly to warning signs (</niosh/topics/heatstress> or <http://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat>). Also, NIOSH's Fast Facts on the topic are available for download at </niosh/docs/2010-114/pdfs/2010-114.pdf> .

In Memoriam

Velayudhan “Val” Vallyathan, Ph.D., NIOSH Health Effects Laboratory Division



Val Vallyathan died in a tragic accident Friday, July 23, while visiting family in New Jersey. Val came to NIOSH in 1979. He was a research physiologist and team leader, and, after his retirement in 2009, an expert consultant in the NIOSH Health Effects Laboratory Division. Val's influence on occupational health research was widely acknowledged and reached around the world. Nominated 17 times for Alice Hamilton and Charles C. Shepard Awards, Val received the Alice Hamilton award in 1999 and 2001 and honorable mentions in other years. He served as a book editor, guest editor, and chapter or review contributor for many volumes and has authored at least 376 full publications in scientific journals. His greatest scientific contributions were to the understanding of silicosis and the roles of free radicals in lung disease. NIOSH has lost a dedicated and committed lung researcher and friend who will be greatly missed.

Jane Roemer, J.D., NIOSH Office of the Director



Jane Roemer passed away on July 17, following an extended illness. Jane served as NIOSH's Associate Director for Policy and Legislation from 1999 through 2004, after which she worked on special assignments for the NIOSH director. She worked closely with the Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, integrating worker health and safety topics into their curriculum. Most recently, Jane was working on a WorkLife initiative with the Department of Veterans Affairs to connect wellness programs with safety and health protection. Jane was dedicated to the mission of workers' safety and health and will be missed by her colleagues throughout NIOSH and CDC.

No-nose Is Good News

The NIOSH-produced short video, *What is a No-nose Bicycle Saddle?*, was selected as the video of the month by the American Society of Biomechanics. The video is a supplement to the NIOSH workplace solutions document on no-nose saddles for occupational bicycling (#2009-131). Access the document or the video on the NIOSH Topic Page: Bicycle Saddles and Reproductive Health (</niosh/topics/bike>).

2011 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards™ Nominations

Nominations are being accepted through September 1 for the 2011 Safe-in-Sound Excellence in Hearing Loss Prevention Awards.™ The awards are given by NIOSH in partnership with the National Hearing Conservation Association to recognize excellence in hearing loss prevention. <http://www.safeinsound.us> 

Addressing Big Challenges from Tiny Particles

NIOSH researchers continue to address the complex technical challenges inherent in measuring and controlling occupational exposures to nanoparticles. In a new article in the *Annals of Occupational Hygiene*, researchers describe results from their strategic use of different instruments in one facility to identify sources of carbon nanotube emissions, and to distinguish those manufactured materials from other sources of nanoscale particles in the workplace. This approach may help practitioners to determine appropriate approaches for monitoring occupational exposures to nanoparticles in other workplaces. <http://annhyg.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/54/5/514> 

Vessel Disasters, Falls Overboard Are Leading Causes in Commercial Fishing Deaths

Vessel disasters and falls overboard continue to be the main causes of deaths among commercial fishing crews, NIOSH researchers find in a study published in the July 16 *Morbidity & Mortality* Weekly Report. The study reports numbers and rates of U.S. commercial fishing deaths from 2000 through 2009, examines trends and causes, and discusses opportunities for further safety interventions. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5927a2.htm?s_cid=mm5927a2_w#tab2

NIOSH in “Top Ten” *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* List

On July 8, the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene* announced the top ten most highly cited articles published in that journal from 2007-2009 (<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/cited/UOEH.pdf>)  . Four of the top 10 papers were published by NIOSH researchers:

[Occupational Risk Management of Engineered Nanoparticles](#) 

[Identification and Characterization of Potential Sources of Worker Exposure to Carbon Nanofibers During Polymer Composite Laboratory Operations](#) 

[New Respirator Fit Test Panels Representing the Current U.S. Civilian Work Force](#) 

[Effectiveness of Local Exhaust Ventilation \(LEV\) in Controlling Engineered Nanomaterial Emissions During Reactor Cleanout Operations](#) 

NIOSH Requests Comments On Respirator Requirements

Proposed Rule on Total Inward Leakage Requirements for Respirators. Comment period extended through September 30. </niosh/docket/nioshdocket0137.html>

NIOSH Congratulates...

Tom Connor received the 2010 International Society of Oncology Pharmacy Practitioners Achievement Award in recognition of his leadership in the development and publication of the ISOPP Standards of Practice–Safe Handling of Cytotoxic Drugs. A summary of the paper is available at http://opp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/13/3_suppl/1 .

NIOSH 2010 Diversity Award winners: Cherie Estill, Grant King, and the NIOSH Coal Workers Health Surveillance Team: LuAnn Beeckman-Wagner, Sheila Bowser, Linda DeVor, Sue Englehart, James Lawson, Meria Marstiller, Jennifer Orrahood, Lea Pyles, and Anita Wolfe. This award recognizes NIOSH employees, teams, and projects for supporting and encouraging diversity across the Institute. More information on diversity at NIOSH is available at </niosh/pgms/diversity/>.

News from Our Partners

Connecticut Study Focuses on Clinic-based Audiometric Testing

The Connecticut Department of Public Health recently surveyed Connecticut occupational health clinics to determine the relationship between the availability of audiometric testing services in clinics (as well as clinical practice variations) and recognition or reporting of hearing loss cases. The survey found that audiometric testing services are available in over 95% of clinics. Additionally, clinicians reported routinely providing audiometric exams upon request from employers or patients who work in industry sectors at high risk for noise-induced hearing loss. More information about this study and other occupational health surveillance, intervention, and education activities can be found at the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Occupational Health Program Web site at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth> .

Louisiana Conducts Health Surveillance of Oil Response Workers

In response to the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana’s Occupational Health Program partnered with other Louisiana Office of Public Health staff to develop a surveillance system to capture and track acute health complaints potentially related to the oil spill. Health reports are received from hospitals; occupational, primary care, and urgent care

clinics close to the response staging areas; the Louisiana Poison Center; and calls to a health hotline. Weekly analysis and reporting of the surveillance data has enabled state and federal public health officials to monitor and respond to the wide range of occupational hazards affecting response workers. Reports are available at <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=378> .

Innovative Residency Training

The newly expanded occupational medicine residency program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler now provides four residents with opportunities to develop competencies to meet patient and worker health needs related to agriculture and rural occupations. Residents rotate at the Texas Institute of Occupational Safety and Health®, a member clinic of the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics since 1988. A second cycle of NIOSH Training Project Grants supports clinical rotations in migrant/community health centers, agricultural worksite evaluations, and focused clinical didactics through partnerships with two NIOSH Agricultural Research Centers. Residents also have the opportunity to learn and apply GIS mapping to investigate work exposures related to health outcomes. For more information see <http://www.tiosh.org/programsoccmedtpg.asp>  or e-mail jeffrey.levin@uthct.edu.

OSHA Accepting Training Grant Applications Through August 6

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is soliciting applications for \$2.75 million in Susan Harwood Targeted Topic Training Grants to provide training and education programs on safety and health for workers and their employers. For more information go to the Federal Register (<http://s.dol.gov/3T>)  or to <http://www.grants.gov>  for the complete solicitation for grant applications. Applications are due August 6.

Health Hazard Evaluations (HHE)

Two New Health Hazard Evaluation Reports Now Available



Evaluation of 1-Bromopropane Use in Four New Jersey Commercial Dry Cleaning Facilities.

The HHE Program responded to a request to evaluate potential health hazards in dry cleaning facilities that switched from using perc (perchloroethylene) to 1-bromopropane. HHE Program investigators found no cases of peripheral neuropathy among owners or employees in these facilities but did find levels of 1-bromopropane that exceeded recommended occupational exposure limits. Investigators recommended that dry cleaning facilities using 1-bromopropane use a qualified technician to convert the machines and follow the manufacturer's guidelines for safe product use.

</niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2008-0175-3111.pdf> 

Evaluation of Exposures to Pesticides and Parasitic Vectors During Inspection of Imported Aquatic Plants.

The HHE Program responded to a request to evaluate potential hazards from inspecting imported aquatic plants. HHE Program investigators found that none of the 20 pesticides analyzed were detected in air or on surfaces. Investigators recommended that employees continue to use personal protective equipment, including gloves and long-sleeve lab coats, when inspecting imported plants. Investigators also recommended that inspectors continue to use absorbent pads or newspapers when inspecting imported aquatic plants to absorb residual contaminated water. </niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2008-0070-3112.pdf> 

NORA

Implementation in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Industries

Gil Fried of the University of New Haven, a member of the NORA Service Sector Council, worked with other industry professionals and created a newsletter for the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industries, a subsector of the NORA Services Sector. The newsletter was distributed in May 2010. The first annual newsletter summarized the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics injury and fatality data for industry segments and provided the authors' risk management tips. The newsletter addresses goals outlined in the National Services Agenda (www.cdc.gov/nora/comment/agendas/services/). In response, several national associations have started working with the NORA Services Sector Council to help reduce injuries for their members. Further information is available from David Utterback, cochair of the Service Sector Council, at dutterback@cdc.gov.

What's new on the NIOSH Science Blog?

Reflections on the INTERPHONE Study of Cell Phones and Brain Cancer

Does radiofrequency (RF) energy from cell phones pose a risk for brain cancer? This question is of interest to the occupational safety and health community since many people use cell phones and other RF devices at their work. This month's blog examines controversial results of a study that was designed to test whether indicators of a cell phone's RF radiation correlate with increased cancers in the head. </niosh/blog/>

Communication Products

Safety Recommendations for Fire Fighters Working Around Vacant Structures

Fire fighters often are killed or injured while fighting fires in abandoned, vacant, or unoccupied structures. A new NIOSH alert recommends strategic measures for keeping fire fighters safe in the potentially dangerous and deadly surroundings of structure fires involving buildings that may have been dilapidated, decayed, or damaged. </niosh/docs/2010-153/pdfs/2010-153.pdf> 

Workers Compensation Workshop Proceedings Available

Workshop proceedings are now available from the September 2009 workshop, Use of Workers' Compensation Data for Prevention of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. The workshop was jointly sponsored by NIOSH, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Council for Compensation Insurance, and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention Program. The workshop proceedings contain articles based on each presentation, a discussion summary, and recommended next steps (</niosh/docs/2010-152/>). Limited numbers of print versions can be ordered at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/niosh.aspx>.

More...

To see other new NIOSH communication products, including documents and topic pages, go to the NIOSH "What's New" page. </niosh/whatsnew/>

Call for Papers

ASTM's Ninth Symposium on Performance of Protective Clothing and Equipment: Emerging Issues and Technologies

Call for abstracts. Deadline for submission is August 15. <http://www.astm.org/SYMPOSIA> 

Upcoming Conferences & Workshops

ASTM International Symposium on Surface and Dermal Sampling

October 14-15, San Antonio, TX. <http://www.astm.org/D22symp1010.htm> 

138th Annual Meeting and Exposition of the American Public Health Association

November 6-10, Denver, CO. <http://www.apha.org/meetings/> 

16th Annual National Ergonomics Conference and Exposition (ErgoExpo)

November 30-December 3, Las Vegas, NV. <http://www.ergoexpo.com/> 

Musculoskeletal Disorders and Chronic Pain Conference

February 10-12, 2011, Los Angeles, CA. <http://www.cirpd.org/conference2011/> 

A comprehensive list of upcoming conferences can be found at </niosh/exhibits.html>.

Word of the Month

INTERPHONE — an epidemiologic study that was funded by the European Union and health agencies in 13 countries that interviewed adults about their cell phone use and then tested whether indicators of the phone’s RF radiation correlated with increased cancers in the head.

Please send your comments and suggestions to us at nioshenews@cdc.gov.

This newsletter is published monthly via email by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to inform members of the public health community as well as interested members of the general public of Institute related news, new publications, and updates on existing programs and initiatives.

Last Reviewed: September 10, 2009