

THE ASSESSMENT OF PERIODIC EMPLOYEE HEALTH EXAMINATION AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE DETERMINATION

Project implementation period: 2011-2012 m.

Aim: 1. to determine how general practitioners (GPs) conduct periodic employee health examinations, what is their preparation for determining occupational diseases, and their attitude towards preventive employee health examination procedure is; 2. to find out employees' motives to seek the determination of occupational diseases, their experience in participating in periodic employee health examinations and in participating in the process of suspecting an occupational disease, investigation, and determining it, as well as their attitude towards this process.

Tasks. 1. to investigate periodic employee health examinations and occupational disease determination aspects on the basis of GP survey data; 2. to analyse occupational disease determination aspects, employees' motives and experience in seeking the confirmation of an occupational disease.

Methods and results 1. An anonymous questionnaire survey of doctors was held. With 49.4% of the doctors, the information on occupational risk factors, provided in a personal health card by the employer, is sufficient. 50.4% of the respondents suspected an occupational disease in their practice. Upon suspecting an occupational disease, 62.7% of the doctors always fill out the notification form. The main reason for not filling out the notification are the additional unpaid work and patient's request. 35.3% of GPs never consult an occupational medicine doctor when carrying out preventive employee health examinations. 19.3% of GPs carry out the periodic employee health examinations without having completed an occupational medicine course of any duration. 32.5% of GPs who completed the course were present at the last course more than 5 years ago. 57.6% of GPs evaluate the occupational medicine courses positively. The main drawbacks of the courses are poor instruction quality and tools, provided outdated information and insufficient duration of the courses. More than half of the GPs assess their knowledge in conducting periodic employee health examinations as average or insufficient. The majority of the GPs assess their skills in suspecting occupational diseases as average or insufficient. The preventive employee health examination order is satisfactory for 34.5% of the GPs. 13.4% of the GPs have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the company working conditions of the employees whose preventive health examination is being carried out. The majority of the GPs think that a public health specialist, an ergonomics specialist, a psychologist, and a toxicologist should participate in the preventive health examinations. 14.3% of the GPs are satisfied with the rates of payments for the preventive health examinations. 36.1% of the GPs indicated that the preventive employee health examination activity is not under control. 2. The people who came to an occupational medicine doctor for an occupational disease determination were surveyed. The income of more than half of the employees who come for an occupational disease determination fell during the previous 6 months or they were afraid of it falling. For 67% of the employees the main motive for an occupational disease determination was the expectation to receive monetary compensation. When applying for an occupational disease determination, employees mostly fear further health deterioration (72%) and losing the job (21%). 4.2% of the respondents were suspected to be suffering from an occupational illness during the periodic employee health examination. The main reasons for not suspecting occupational diseases during the periodic health examination are as follows: the doctor did not give enough time and attention to examine health (48.4%) or the respondent's health during the last periodic health examination was still better (46.2%). During the periodic health examination the information provided by the doctor on the effects of harmful factors on health and health examination results was insufficient to 62.5% of the respondents. 13.4% of the respondents claimed that they incurred financial losses for applying for an occupational disease determination while 47.9% of the respondents feel tension in the workplace because the employer was dissatisfied. Half of the respondents indicated that the process of suspecting, investigation and determining an

occupational disease is not sufficiently quick, and they are frustrated by necessary travels and personal expenses.

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