Occupational lung disease

europeanlung.org/occupational-lung-disease/

Occupational, or work-related, lung conditions are conditions that have been caused or made worse by the materials a person is exposed to within the workplace.

The impact of these conditions is underestimated due to under-reporting. For example, occupational disease is more likely to occur in the elderly, who are no longer at work but whose condition is due to their previous occupation.

Areas for action

- Exposure standards should be health based and uniform across Europe and updated to reduce the exposure of the working population to acceptable levels
- Work and health authorities should aim for realistic targets to decrease incidence of lung conditions caused by silicosis and working in mines
- Legislators must look at the use of nano-materials and how this is affecting health
- European efforts to detect and reduce occupational carcinogenic exposures need to be continued.
- European countries need to register occupational diseases in order to provide accurate data on burden and costs

Up to 15% of all asthma cases are linked to occupational factors

15-20% of COPD cases are linked to factors in the workplace

Research from Sweden and Finland found that one in 10 farmers has experienced an acute inhalation injury resulting from exposure to dust

15% of lung cancer cases in men and 5% in women are thought to be caused by occupational exposures

The costs of occupational asthma are high, but this cost usually falls on the state, health insurance, or the individual worker, rather than the employer

In Europe, over 39,000 deaths have been estimated for the year 2000 as a result of work-related exposures to dusts and fumes