Occupational risk factors

Occupational risk factors is a term used to describe the harmful effects of breathing in various particles, gases, fumes or smoke in the workplace. These different factors are often referred to as ‘agents’.

Areas for action

- Workplace limits should take into account what levels of agents can cause allergies, in addition to occupational diseases
- Physicians should be educated about taking adequate exposure history
- As new agents are identified they should be swiftly regulated

Exposure to particles, gases, fumes or smoke in the workplace is responsible for 15% of all respiratory cancers in men and 5% in women

Between 350 and 400 different agents are known to cause occupational asthma

Symptoms of mesothelioma may take up to 50 years to appear

15-20% of all adult asthma cases are work-related

15-20% of COPD cases are work-related

10% of all interstitial lung disease cases are work-related