

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

and again you may assess the contents of the this next, fifth issue of IJOMEH.

The fifth one means that our journal has evolved in 2013 – accordingly to the Journal Development Plan – from quarterly into bimonthly, therefore the 6th issue, just in editing, will close the volume 26.

In this issue you may find as many as 14 articles, shortly summarized below.

The first paper by E. Niebudek-Bogusz and M. Śliwińska-Kowalska, our colleagues from Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, Łódź, Poland, presents an overview of occupational voice disorders, which still make most frequent recognized occupational disease, mainly in teachers, in Poland. The authors discuss etiopathogenesis, diagnostic procedures, medical and legal aspects of certifying occupational dysphonia, as well as the preventive programs.

The article by G. Kaliniene et al., Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas, Lithuania, who investigated associations between neck musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and work related factors, opens the section of the original papers. The survey performed among public service computer workers showed the MDS prevalence rate 65%, significantly associated with older age, longer work experience, high quantitative and cognitive job demands.

Another survey conducted among restaurant workers by J. Reijula et al., Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and Hjelt Institute, Helsinki, Finland, was aimed at evaluation of the impact of the smoke-free legislation in general, and in particular after the total smoking ban launched in 2007. It turned out that total prohibition of smoking but not partial restriction in restaurants was effective in reducing work-related exposure to tobacco smoke.

The 7-year follow-up study to determine respiratory changes in dental technicians was carried out by D.Ö. Dogan et al. from Cumhuriyet University, Sivas, Turkey. They found – in examination by the end of 7th year – an increase of cases of pneumoconiosis, significant progression of radiological findings and deterioration of spirometric parameters, indicating a need for preventive measures.

The next study by S.A. Meo et al., King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was concerned with the impact of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), spending on Research and Development (R&D), the number of universities and scientific journals on published research documents, citations and H-index in environmental sciences in 16 Middle East (ME) countries. The analysis of the data for the period 1966–2011 leads to the conclusion that ME countries which spend more on R&D and which have a large number of universities and ISI indexed journals are likely to produce a greater volume of research papers in the area of environmental science.

K. Zużewicz et al. (Central Institute for Labour Protection, National Research Institute, Warsaw University of Technology, CRASH s.c., Medical University of Warsaw, Warszawa, Poland) studied circulatory and muscular system activity by means of electrocardiography (ECG) and electromyography (EMG) in conditions of a crash threat in a passenger car driving simulator. In most of the drivers, ECG signal changes occurred in the parameter values reflecting heart rate variability in the time domain; the changes in the EMG concerned the signal amplitude recorded from the flexor digitorum superficialis muscle. These two changes were not always simultaneous.

The determinants of premature mortality in a city population were examined by I. Maniecka-Bryła et al., Medical University of Lodz (Łódź, Poland). The analysis revealed statistically

significant associations between the number of premature deaths and the following variables: a negative self-evaluation of health, poor financial conditions, smoking, coronary pain, depression, insomnia. The results indicate a need to expand and intensify relevant prophylactic activities in Poland.

The next paper by A. Haschke et al. from University of Freiburg and University of Education, Freiburg, Germany, describes development of short form questionnaires from 2 domains of the WCIB-Cardio item banks for the assessment of work capacity in cardiovascular rehabilitation patients. The questionnaires make it possible to monitor patient's work capacity in a more economical way.

Another article, by S. Pullopdisakul et al., Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand, is devoted to evaluation of prevalence of the upper extremity musculoskeletal disorders (UEMSD) in workers of an electronic factory. The study pointed out high prevalence of clinically diagnosed UEMSD exemplified by radial styloid tenosynovitis, trigger finger, carpal tunnel syndrome, lateral epicondylitis, associated with high force of wrist, awkward positioning of fingers, contact stress on finger but not with repetitive motion.

The next paper by S. Montazer et al. (Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Hooman Research Collaborators Institute, Tehran, Iran) is focused on assessment of construction workers' hydration status using urine specific gravity (USG). The study showed strong correlation between USG and transepidermal water loss (TWL) indices, which means that the USG can be considered as a predictor of thermal stress. The difference between USG among the sun-exposed and non-exposed workers and increase in USG during mid-day work prove the sensitivity of this measure, whereas the high level of dehydration despite acceptable TWL indicate that heat stress management without considering the real hydration status is insufficient. The study of F. Atabi and S.A.H. Mirzahosseini from Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran, aimed to assess the risk of cancer due to benzene in the ambient air of gas

stations and traffic zones in the north of Tehran. The results showed a notable increase of cancer risks for the vicinity population close to the gas stations in comparison to the vicinity population in the traffic zones.

Assessment of 8-oxo-7,8-dihydro-2'-deoxyguanosine (8-oxodG) as a marker of oxidative DNA damage is presented by R. Beerappa et al. from Occupational Health Center, Bangalore, India. The study including the gasoline filling station attendants exposed to petrol revealed that 8-oxodG is related to chemical exposure.

J. Jurewicz et al., Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, Łódź, Poland, investigated the relationship between 1-hydroxypyrene (1-OHP) as a biomarker of exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) known for their reproductive toxicity and semen quality impairment activity. It was indicated that the level of environmental exposure to PAHs adversely affects semen quality in the form of sperm neck abnormalities, decreased semen volume and reduced percentage of motile sperm cells.

The experimental study by J. Kowalówka-Zawieja et al. from Poznan University of Medical Sciences, Poznań, Poland, has assessed the influence of acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) on benzene hematotoxicity in rats. The findings suggest that ASA limited the benzene-induced hematotoxicity. The last paper, by C. Juntarawijit, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand, reports health problems among residents living nearby the biomass power plants. The results of the questionnaire survey showed a higher prevalence of allergies, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in residents living within 1 km from the plants, and of such symptoms like eye irritation, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing among those living within 0.5 km.

Looking forward to introducing you soon the 6th last 2013 issue of our bimonthly we wish everybody a good time reading with a hope that the contents of the issue will prove interesting.

*Prof. Wiesław J. Sułkowski, MD, PhD
on behalf of the Editorial Board*