Understanding Occupational Health

Occupational Health is the field of medicine which deals with relationships between the human body and work conditions. It aims to make work adapted to man, instead of the other way around. Essentially preventive in nature, its goals are to:

- Promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of employees in all occupations;
- Prevent diseases among workers caused by their working conditions;
- Protect employees from risk factors which could affect their health;
- Place & maintain of workers in an occupational environment adapted to their physiological & psychological status.

How to prevent occupational disease?

Work-related diseases can appear according to the work conditions & can be determined by:

- **Physical factors**: noise, vibrations, emission of rays, industrial microclimate (environment)
- **Chemical factors**: toxic chemical substances (exposure to chemicals, irritating gases, flames)
- **Biological factors**: viruses, parasites, fungi, microbes
- **Psychological factors**: overwork, inadequate work conditions, inappropriate relationship between colleagues etc.

How does work relate to the disease?

Occupational factors can be:

- the single cause of certain disease
- can contribute to the development of diseases
- can make an existing disease worse
Why do we need to look for occupational causes?

- By stopping the exposure you can limit the effect on the patient
- By recognizing the problem the company can review safety measures and protect the workers, so further cases can be avoided and losses for the company can be limited.

What are work related injuries?

These are accidents in the workplace which affects both workers and the company

**Workers** - causes suffering for the workers, can lead to permanent disability, loss of income or extreme cases, death

**Company** - Additional cost for the company, lost of time and absenteeism

**How to prevent?** Always follow safety instructions. *Think before you act!*

Who is responsible? Everybody!

**Role of Employer**
Responsible for ensuring that machinery, equipment, agents, premises, and processes under their control are safe and without risk to the health of all workers. They should assess and manage risks, undertake the relevant preventive & control measures, and when necessary, providing PPE.

**Role of Employee**
Cooperate and participate in all measures implemented to promote safe workplace. They should follow safety health instructions and procedures, report any work related accident or injury and any hazardous situation and initiate or request and participate in OSH training and awareness-raising activities

**Role of Occupational Safety & Health Specialist**
OSH Specialist can be engineers, physicians, biologist, ergonomists, chemists, nurses, doctors who have chosen to apply their skills to protect the health of workers and promoting the adaptation of work to their needs and capacities.

They design, establish, implement and manage workers’ health surveillance schemes that will facilitate preventive action; monitor work environment and working practices which may affect workers’ health; advise on planning and organization of work; design and implement preventive program for the improvement of working practices; and advice on OH, safety, hygiene and ergonomics as well as on collective and individual protective measures and equipment.

**Role of Government**
Develop a sound occupational safety & health legislation and establish bodies for consultation and collaboration among relevant authorities.
Designing, implementing, assessing and improving the OSH policies and programs and ensuring compliance of all.

**FACTS**
- Every year, there is over 2.3 million work related death (almost 2 million due to fatal work-related diseases)
- over 313 million non-fatal occupation accidents
- Over 160 million non-fatal work related diseases
Understanding Occupational Health

CEDARS - Jebel Ali International Hospital

is a full-fledged multi-specialty hospital offering services ranging from Pediatrics to Occupational Health, Laparoscopic Surgery to Radiology departments. CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital is accredited by JCI and located next to JAFZA Gate 2.

Occupational Health medicals

Pre employment medical exams
These are medical examinations aimed to ascertain that employees are medically fit for the work and working conditions specified. For the prospective employer it is good to know that the right person will start the right job, without an increased risk of long absenteism and extra costs. For the OH Physician it is important to have “baseline” data in order to be able to judge normal age-related or exposure-caused changes in body functions.

Periodical medicals
These are regular medical screenings aimed to detect adverse health conditions that result from hazards and diseases existing in or derived from the workplace. With early detection, preventive measures such as elimination of hazards can be applied. This will also prevent exposures and risks to coworkers as well.

Examples: protection of the population through regular food handlers medical screening or drivers fitness evaluation, audiometry test to detect hearing loss

Common occupational hazards and their effects

• Musculoskeletal disorders
  - Repetitive strain injuries caused by short-cycle movements in production environment, office work, cashiers etc.
  - Tendinitis (inflammation of a tendon) or muscular strain due to non-neutral postures like reaching, squatting, bending, turning of spine, wrists
  - Vibration induced skeletal disorders like advanced degenerative damage to the lumbar spine and the small joints mainly of the hand, neurovascular disorders like vaspastisctic white finger, Raynaud

  How to prevent?
  - Use ergonomic design of the workplace
  - Rotating posts, so your body will not be subjected to the same strains all day

• Dermatological Problems
  - Irritation, contact dermatitis due to exposure to chemicals, certain materials; if neglected the condition can worsen and cross-allergies may develop

  How to prevent?
  - Always protect your skin by wearing the correct protective clothing and using the suitable gloves as instructed by your safety officer

• Climate related diseases
  - Extreme temperatures can lead to heatstroke or frostbite, high blood pressure and heart disease

  How to prevent?
  - Use protective clothing
  - Improve ventilation
  - Take enough fluids
  - Pause when necessary in an area with ambient temperature.

• Infection or parasitic diseases
  - This is especially important in healthcare agriculture, and labwork

  How to prevent?
  - Always follow the instructions of the infection control committee or responsible.
  - Make sure you know all the procedures and execute them in a correct way. If you lack knowledge, ask for more information from a more experienced staff or ask the company to organise training
Understanding Occupational Health

CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital is a full-fledged multi-specialty hospital offering services ranging from Pediatrics to Occupational Health, Laparoscopic Surgery to Internal Medicine. The Hospital is equipped with ICU for medical and surgical emergencies, with two major and one minor operation theatres as well as with fully equipped Laboratory and Radiology departments. The CEDARS Training Center is offering classes in basic life support and advanced cardiac life support through an alliance with the American Heart Association (AHA). Further attached to the hospital are 24-hour pharmacy and Dr. Adnan Kaddaha Clinic. Projects to expand the hospital structure and add more services that enable CEDARS Jebel Ali International Hospital to become a comprehensive tertiary care healthcare provider are under way. The hospital has successfully achieved JCI accreditation in June 2012.

Medical Consultants for April 2015

Dr. Marian Melanie Jan Leys has more than 5 years of experience as a consultant for Occupational Medicine for a variety of clients in industry and government in Belgium. Her responsibility involves inspection visits to workplace, risk analysis and development of medical prevention programs according to the companies, research and statistical analysis of work-related risk, implementation of vaccination programs and tuberculosis screening programs, diagnosis of work-related pathology, evaluation of fitness to work of employees and advice on the use of collective and personal protection. She graduated Cum Laude of Master in Medicine from KUL University Leuven, Belgium and pursued Master after Master in Occupational Medicine at School of Public Health, KUL, Belgium also graduating as Cum Laude. She works at CEDARS - Jebel Ali International Hospital as Occupational Health Physician and serves as the Head of the Department of Occupational Health.

Dr. Farzad Ghaedi has more than 7 years experience as a medical doctor in the UAE. He had worked in several hospitals such as Al Kuwaiti Hospital, Al Qasimi Hospital and Russian Hospital. His experience includes working in Accident & Emergency Department, General Surgery and Internal Medicine. Dr. Ghaedi received his M.B.B.S in St. Petersburg, Medical State of Pavlov I.P. on 2003. He also speaks several languages such as English, Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Russian.

About CEDARS - Jebel Ali International Hospital

Established in 1999, CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital was the only full-fledged 24-hour medical center in the Jebel Ali area and it was upgraded into a hospital in August 2004. Today it is a full-fledged multi-specialty hospital offering services ranging from Pediatrics to Occupational Health, Laparoscopic Surgery to Internal Medicine. The Hospital is equipped with ICU for medical and surgical emergencies, with two major and one minor operation theatres as well as with fully equipped Laboratory and Radiology departments. The CEDARS Training Center is offering classes in basic life support and advanced cardiac life support through an alliance with the American Heart Association (AHA). Further attached to the hospital are 24-hour pharmacy and Dr. Adnan Kaddaha Clinic. Projects to expand the hospital structure and add more services that enable CEDARS Jebel Ali International Hospital to become a comprehensive tertiary care healthcare provider are under way. The hospital has successfully achieved JCI accreditation in June 2012.