

# Professional Hazard in Health Services

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It is possible to divide the assessment of hazards in health services into dimensions : **Specific and Non-specific risk factors**

### *Specific risk factors*

#### **Physical factors**

- Ionizing radiation-radiologists,nuclear medicine workers undergo regular check ups to ensure level of radiation exposure to them is kept at a minimum.They are also provided with radiation meters to measure amount of radiation in their vicinity
- Non-ionizing radiation- UV,usually health workers involved with laser technology eg plastic surgeons,dermatologists,oncologists
- Noise and vibration-dentists, orthopaedics,plastic surgeons : This can impair or lead to hearing loss as exposure is always present.Vibrations tend to manifest in possibility of carpal tunnel syndrome,but the vibration stress is not as drastic as that of manual labourers
- Physical stress-The physical burden of working stressful hours that may lead to health workers not gaining enough rest,it weighs in on the bodies recovery.Physical stress can be in terms of an actual physical object causing harm to a person at the work place eg dental,surgical tools etc

#### **Chemical factors**

- Sterilisation chemicals in surgery,and general cleaning chemicals for the hospital can result in allergic reactions,some may prove to be fatal if not quickly addressed.
- Anti-neoplastic agents-eg chlorambucil, tamoxifen, azathioprine,all poses mutagenic,teratogenic abilities which can lead to mutations causing cancer to the practitioner.
- Handling of mercury in dentistry-Possible ailments include ;dermatitis,airway irritation ,malignancies.It usually has toxic effects on the brain kidney lungs. Mercury poisoning from mismanagement of mercury can lead to several ailments eg acrodynia, Hunter-Russell syndrome and Minamata disease

#### **Biological factors**

- These are the ones most health personnel are exposed to from patients
- Infections- S.Aureus,TB, HBV,HAV,HIV,influenza,varicella,MRSA etc : Being exposed to infectious agents at hospitals practitioners are in a constant hazard if correct protocol is not followed and if carelessness runs the day. In this respect it is advisable to have an insurance coverage for infection by the said agents,but main message is that practitioner must follow correct sterile techniques to avoid risk of endangering themselves
- Scabies-a contagious skin infection seen among humans and animals. It is caused by a parasite known as *Sarcoptes Scabiei*. The disease may be transmitted from objects but is most often transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact, with a higher risk with prolonged contact.Infections require four to six weeks to become symptomatic.

### *Non-specific risk factors*

**Psychological stress** - the entire medical procedure hosts choices that affect the practitioner eg breaking news of cancer,amputation,death on a daily basis. Such can burden the practitioner leading to mental stress and this stress can manifest in a somatic way,as much as they try to distance themselves from emotional attachment,lets face it,we are human beings first,thus have an emotional aspect to us.This can in one way or the other affect the practitioners health. . The risk of stress itself can lead to **Burn Out Syndrome** which would not prove to be a good thing for both parties concerned employer and employee.It leads to loss of wages and loss of valuable person ell

## **References**

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2. Class notes Hygiene and Epidemiology. Occupational Health Risk Assessment (M. Tuček)