

SKIN CANCER: SAFE WORK UNDER THE SUN

EADV CAMPAIGN



MEPs AGAINST CANCER MEETING

27 March 2018, 13:00-15:00
European Parliament, room A5G305



Hosted by MEP Marita Ulvskog (SE, S&D)
Co-hosted by MEP Jens Gieseke (DE, EPP) & Alojz Peterle (SI, EPP)

KEY MESSAGES

- Around 15 million workers in the EU spend more than 75% of their working time outdoors and having regular exposure to UV radiation doubles their risk of non-melanoma skin cancer.
- Exposure to UV radiation is one of the main occupational risk factors however long latency period between exposure to UV radiation and development of the cancer makes it difficult to recognise it as an occupational disease.
- There is a need for improved registration of skin cancers in the EU in order to have reliable and valuable data.
- Health literacy for outdoor workers should be improved. Informative campaigns have proven to be successful in awareness raising (e.g. skin cancer campaign in Northern Ireland resulted in 34% increase in diagnosed skin cancer cases).
- In the ever changing work environment (e.g. exposure to new materials, substances, shifts in the forms of employment) improvements and revisions should also be done on the EU legislation level.

INTRODUCTION

MEP Marita Ulvskog welcomes co-hosts MEPs Jens Gieseke and Alojz Peterle, speakers and other participants at the European Parliament. Occupational skin cancer problem addresses millions of outdoor workers in the EU. It is important to ensure that workers have access to health surveillance their whole lives not just while they are working and being exposed to risk factors. There is a need for awareness raising among workers and their employers as well as more attention to occupational skin cancer issue on the EU and Member States' level.

SPEAKERS PRESENTATIONS

“Occupational skin cancer: What is at stake?”

Prof. Dr. Swen Malte John, Chair of EADV's Media & PR Committee

WHO and International Labour Organisation (ILO) ranks occupational exposure to UV radiation as one of the main occupational risk factors. Nevertheless, only 7 EU countries recognise non-melanoma skin cancer as occupational disease. 14.5 million of workers in the EU spend more than 75% of their working time outdoors where they are exposed to UV radiation which doubles their risk of non-melanoma skin cancer. Dr John names few important steps that should be done to improve the situation:

- On the EU level – e.g. developing strategic EU roadmap for eliminating work-related cancer, including UV radiation in carcinogens that have BOEL (Binding occupational exposure limits).
- Applying regular health surveillance and education for outdoor workers as well as improving prevention measures which are cheap and convenient compared to other cancer types.

“Facts and Figures: What's the UV exposure of outdoor workers?”

Dr. Marc Wittlich, Institute for Occupational Safety and health (IFA)

Dr. Wittlich introduces research conducted in Germany measuring UV exposure for outdoor workers. It encompassed 1000 test persons in more than 200 occupations in a 4-year period. It can be concluded that under the highest UV radiation exposure are sewer construction workers, quarry workers and outdoor construction workers. However, amount of UV radiation significantly varies even within the same profession depending on exact occupational activity in details. Dr. Wittlich concludes that structural prevention in general is at good level however improvements in behaviour centred prevention are needed – “When I protect myself, I will be healthy” approach in the society as a whole has to start in childhood days.

“Costs on occupational cancer in the EU”

Marian Schaapman, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

Every year there are around 1.3 million cancer deaths in the EU and it is estimated that 2 – 12 percent of those are due to occupational factors. Cancer is the first cause of death at work in the EU, however it is still “invisible” as there is long latency period between exposure to carcinogen and chronic illness. Economic burden of cancer can be sorted in 3 categories:

Cost	Examples	Who pays for the costs?
Direct	Medical care - treatment, rehabilitation costs etc.	Payer (patient, health system, insurance etc.)
Indirect	Loss from work, loss of employer's productivity etc.	Economy
Intangible/human	Emotional costs, time etc.	Patient and people involved

“The economic burden of occupational skin cancer on health care systems”

Dr. Matthias Augustin, Director Institute of Health Care Research in Dermatology and Nursing

Dr. Augustin in his presentation focuses on economic aspects of occupational skin cancer on health care systems. Occupational skin cancer is frequent, burdensome and economically relevant. To avoid long-term costs and diseases' burden, primary prevention in occupational skin cancer is essential. In professions with increased sun exposure specific measures of awareness and protection provide actual value of money. It is concluded that there is need for better registration of skin cancers, particularly in risk areas. Data is important in future research nevertheless very few cancer registries accept data about non-melanoma cancer or there are different practices in the EU in non-melanoma cancer recording.

“The workers’ perspective”

Rolf Gehring, Political Secretary Safety & Health, European Federation of Building and Woodworkers

There is an ever faster change in working conditions, new materials, substances and their combinations that workers are coming across with. Workers are facing shifts in forms of employment e.g. seasonal work, self-employment. It is measured that there are growing social costs caused by occupational diseases. Taking into account all of the reasons Mr Gehring puts forward concrete demands and proposals on the EU level e.g.:

- Inclusion of natural UV radiation into Directive 2006/25.
- Recognition of the various types of skin cancer caused by exposure to natural UV radiation.
- Current Revision of the Carcinogens and Mutagens Directive.

“Roadmap of carcinogens and the Dangerous substances campaign”

Dr. Elke Schneider, Prevention and Research Unit, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Dr. Schneider presents EU-OSHA’s contribution to the roadmap on carcinogens and the Healthy Workplaces campaign 2018-19 on dangerous substances. EU-OSHA has lead research and studies related to occupational exposure to carcinogens with conclusions that UV radiation is one of the most common carcinogenic exposures and skin diseases are among the 5 most reported occupational diseases in the EU Member states. Findings in the studies mark importance of continuous awareness raising about the issue. The Healthy Workplaces Campaign will be launched 24th April 2018 and aims to target both policymakers by providing information on policy developments and relevant legislation, and workers and employers to raise awareness of the risks posed by dangerous substances in the workplace and support prevention.

“Skin cancer campaign in Northern Ireland”

Roisin Foster, CEO, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland

Ms Foster introduces skin cancer campaign in Northern Ireland. Despite Northern Ireland’s geographical location people are still highly affected by the UV exposure – during summer months’ exposure can be equivalent to Southern European countries. Skin cancer campaign in Northern Ireland had objectives to increase public awareness of sun exposure and improve early detection. Main target groups were the ones most affected by the UV exposure – children and outdoor workers. Evaluation feedback in 2015 indicated a positive shift in employers’ approaches to sun safety including an improvement in the number of organisations using sun protection policies. Incidence statistics also suggest an increased awareness among the population targeted by the programme, particularly as an increase in the number of cases diagnosed (34% increase in 2015 compared to 2014) at an earlier stage was observed in men of working age but not in women.

"Horizon 2020 COST Action OMEGA"

Dr. Michelle Turner, Barcelona Institute for Global Health

Dr. Turner presents OMEGA-NET - A network to optimize the use of occupational, industrial, and population cohorts in Europe to ultimately foster preventive strategies and policies. OMEGA-NET launched in October 2017 and currently has participants from 28 European countries and international partner country – Australia. Network has 4 working groups working on following issues:

- WG1. Inventory of Occupational Cohorts.
- WG2. Harmonisation of Existing Occupational Exposure and Outcome Information.
- WG3. Standardised Protocols for New Occupational Data Collection.
- WG4. Science Communications, Dissemination and Training.