The Working Group on Occupational Infectious Agents and Prioritisation of Occupational Infectious agents

Mary Ross and Kari Reijula

WGOIA

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Work-related exposure to infectious agents

- Globally, an estimated 320,000 workers die every year from communicable diseases caused by viral, bacterial, insect and animal-related biological hazards
- Most of these affect developing countries and over 5000 fatalities occur in the EU
- Women are more likely to be affected than men, as they work more often in occupations that involve biological hazards and exposure
- Given the speed and volume of international traffic and trade, these substances may spread around the globe within a few hours and start a new pandemic (EU OSHA 2009)

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Exposure to infectious agents

- Work in food production plants
- Work in agriculture
- Work activities where there is contact with animals or products of animal origin (or both)
- Work in health care, including isolation and post mortem units
- Work in clinical, veterinary and diagnostic laboratories
- Work in refuse disposal plants
- Work in sewage purification installations

(EU OSHA 2009)

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 ICOH WG on OIA since 2003

- ICOH identified workplace-related infectious diseases as an area of concern
- WG on OIA was established in 2003 at the ICOH congress in Iguassu (Prof. Rantanen and Dr. Facci)
- Objectives:
  - Advice the ICOH officers and board on OIA matters
  - Identify priority OIA and major occupations
  - Develop guidelines and facts sheets to promote prevention and management of OI diseases
  - Provide new information to the ICOH Newsletter
  - Provide information for national and international occupational health events and media
  - Liaise with relevant ICOH SCs

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Tasks assigned for triennium 2009-2012

(Prof. Kogi and Prof. Ross)

- Make recommendations on protection from OIA
- Examine needs for protection against OIA
  - Prioritise organisms
  - Prioritise worker groups
- Produce facts sheets on worker protection
  - Specific need for H1N1 (swine flu) training materials
- Guidelines for HIV / AIDS at the workplace

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Membership of WG on OIA

**Representation (in 2012)**

- 19 members from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Finland, Italy, Japan, Paraguay, South Africa, USA

**Composition**

- Original working group
- Additional ICOH members with specific interest
- Recruited members with expertise in priority areas
Delivering information/communication

- **To promote awareness of OIA**
  - WG on OIA has arranged conferences and scientific meetings on OIA
- **WG on OIA**
  - Email distribution of best evidence to obtain consensus documentation
  - Information supplied to ICOH newsletter
  - Collaboration with relevant ICOH Scientific Committees

Priority groups and actions of the WG on OIA

- Health Care Workers
  - Guide on good practices (draft text): Prof. Stefano Porru
  - Sao Paulo 2013: joint meeting with the SC: HCW, SC OH Nursing and SC OH and Development
- Occupational Travel Medicine
  - Guidelines on OIA and travelers: Prof Peter Leggat & others
- All workers: managing pandemic influenza
  - Existing evidence on SARS, avian and pandemic influenza: Prof Ken Takahashi & others
- All workers: HIV in the workplace
  - Existing evidence (ILO, WHO, etc.), draft policy for small workplaces: Prof Mary Ross and Dr Hugo Salgueiro

Strategic Areas of Focus (in good practice)

- **Fitness for Work**
  - methods/tools/models for assessing health?
  - needed actions according to findings?
- **Risk Assessment**
  - methods/tools/models for risk assessment?
  - actions?
- **Health Surveillance**
  - monitoring/testing, questionnaires, etc.
  - prevention, immediate actions if needed

Prioritising OIAs and groups of workers

**Determining needs**

- Historical (learned from the past)
  - Short, medium and long term (present and future)

**WORKING LIFE IS CHANGING!**

**Public health/epidemiological approach**

- Prevalence
- Mortality
- Morbidity
- Available and feasible interventions
- Community concern

**Methods, tools and models of actions needed!**
Prioritisation of infectious agents

Questions to be answered:
• Environmental workplace interventions
• Vaccine preventable infections
• Personal workplace prevention
• Post exposure prophylaxis

Output targets achieved by WGOIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluated and selected pandemic influenza fact sheets and guides</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article on OIA and review of WGOIA meetings for ICOH newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source model HIV workplace policy and adapt to HIV management standard as template for ICOH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of evidence-based guide on OIA for health care workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of guide on OIA in travellers for OHPs, ICOH session</td>
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Future plans for the WG on OIA

ICOH WG on Occupational Infectious Agents

- Mary Ross (Chair)
- Kari Reijula (Secretary)
- Mario Bonciani
- Jodi Carneiro
- Claudia de Hoyos
- Rudy Facci
- Laura Flores
- Veronica Herrera
- Peter Leggatt
- Claudia Nogueira
- Robin Orford
- Cristina Pariano
- Stefano Porto
- Hugo Saquero
- Claudio Taboada
- Ken Takahashi
- Koji Wada
- Toti Yoshikawa
- Jaspal (JP) Atwal