



## OCCUPATIONAL MORBIDITY AMONG HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Irina GARABAJIU

Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Republic of Moldova

Corresponding author: Irina Garabajiu, e-mail: garabajiu.irin@gmail.com

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**Introduction.** A healthcare profession is one of the most significant, difficult and responsible one, thus being one of the most vulnerable intellectual specialties associated with high levels of daily stress, both physical and emotional. Medical activity results in the health of the population, which is largely determined by the working conditions and the mental health of the medical workers. Health professionals refer to different specialties, having its own characteristics, depending on the work content and environment in which the medical staff is engaged.

**Material and methods.** A range of scientific publications on occupational morbidity among healthcare workers were studied. Bibliographic references were selected from the PubMed and Google Scholar databases. The following key words were used for data selection: occupational diseases, risk factors, healthcare workers, and occupational morbidity.

**Results.** Healthcare workers are daily exposed to different negative factors related to the working environment. However, a condition is termed as an occupational disease in three cases: it may arise as a result of work engagement; it is caused by physical, chemical, and biological risk factors, constantly present at work or due to overwork; when being exposed to long-term risk factors. There are numerous risk factors that can cause occupational diseases, for example, hazardous substances such as chemical and biological agents, including carcinogens; radiation, including ionizing radiation and ultraviolet radiation; physical factors, including vibration, noise, physical activity and sedentary work; occupational organizational and psychosocial risk factors such as night shifts and work stress.

The structure of occupational morbidity of healthcare workers includes diseases caused by biological factors, which are ranked first (50-70%) and might refer to occupational tuberculosis of the respiratory system and viral hepatitis. According to researchers, the second place (10-20%) belongs to allergic diseases, such as dermatitis, eczema, toxicoderma and asthma, which might result from contact with drugs, including antibacterial agents, vitamins, enzymes, disinfectants, latex and other chemicals. Much less frequently (3-9%), medical personnel are diagnosed with diseases caused by overloading of various organs and systems, including pathology of the musculoskeletal system, peripheral nervous system, visual analyzer, and circulatory system. The prevalence of illnesses caused by the exposure to physical factors, such as non-ionizing and ionizing radiation, as well as noise is less than 1%. Another study showed that nurses are more likely to develop diseases of the musculoskeletal, genitourinary and digestive system compared to doctors.

**Conclusions.** Due to the unfavourable working conditions, work content and exposure to environmental risk factors, any healthcare worker might potentially contract an occupational disease at the workplace.