OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESSES CAUSED BY ERGONOMIC RISK FACTORS IN DIAGNOSES OF LITHUANIAN HEALTHCARE WORKERS

STATE LABOUR INSPECTORATE
UNDER THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND LABOUR OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

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1. Every employee shall be provided with adequate and safe working conditions which are not detrimental to health, as provided in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Occupational Safety and Health.
General principles of prevention, Directive 89/391/EEC

- Avoiding risks
- Evaluating risks at source
- Combating risks at source
- Adapting work to the individual
- Adapting to technical progress
- Giving collective protective measures priority
- Giving appropriate instructions to workers
- Overall prevention policy
Action plan

1. Avoid risks
2. Reduce risks
3. Train personnel
Article 25. Employer’s obligation to provide safe working conditions which are not detrimental to health

1. Employer’s representative, in order to fulfil the employer’s obligation to provide safe working conditions not detrimental to health, shall:
   1) ensure that the work environment conforms to occupational health and safety [...]
   2) carry out an occupational risk assessment [...]
   3) provide collective and personal protection equipment [...]
   4) ensure that newly hired employees receive comprehensive information [...]
   5) adopt occupational health and safety instructions [...]
   6) organise employee training [...]
   8) schedule employee work and rest periods [...]
   9) organise mandatory employee health check-ups [...]
   10) transfer employees to duties compatible with their health condition [...]
   16) perform other duties and implement the necessary measures to provide employees with safe working conditions not detrimental to health.
Article 34. Employee rights
Employee shall have the right to:

- 1) demand that the employer provide safe working conditions not detrimental to health, install collective safety equipment, and provide personal safety equipment when collective equipment does not protect from exposure to risk factors
- 2) be informed about work environment factors detrimental and/or hazardous to health
- 3) receive the results of mandatory health check-ups...
- 4) consult the head of unit directly on the improvement of occupational health and safety
- 5) refuse to work in the presence of occupational health and safety hazards...
- 6) demand restitution of damages to health caused by unsafe working conditions
- 7) raise questions on the state of health and safety at the workplace...
The human factor must be taken into consideration at work, especially in the design of work places, the choice of work equipment, and the choice of working and production methods, [...] and reducing negative effect on health [...]
Trends in occupational illnesses, 2008–2017

Number of individuals diagnosed with occupational illnesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Individuals with OIs</th>
<th>OIs at healthcare establishments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>242</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Causes of occupational illnesses

- Manual lifting of loads: 46%
- Tuberculosis: 15%
- Allergens: 15%
- Other factors: 14%
- Repetitive movements: 6%
- Ionising radiation: 2%
- Malaria: 1%
- Hepatitis C: 1%
Distribution of occupational illness cases by occupation

- 43% Nurse
- 22% Driver
- 15% Nursing Assistant
- 7% Other professions
- 5% Masseur
- 5% Physician
- 3% Laboratory Technician
## Company inspections and surveys in 2006 and 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have employees been instructed on the safe lifting of manual loads?</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is auxiliary equipment used at the company to alleviate the work of manual load handling?</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is personal safety equipment in use to protect workers from back injuries?</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many workers lift a patient during a day shift?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many workers lift a patient during a night shift?</td>
<td>1 - 2</td>
<td>1 - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC), which has representatives working in all European Union Member States, carried out a campaign in 2012 to address psychosocial issues. The campaign focused on the following sectors:

Healthcare sector and social care

Hospitality sector, i.e. hotels and restaurants

Transport sector
Campaign results:
Assessment of psychosocial risk factors

- Transport:
  - Assessed: 28%
  - Not assessed: 72%

- Healthcare:
  - Assessed: 54%
  - Not assessed: 46%
Risks determined

Large work load
- Transport: 63%
- Healthcare: 43%

Unclear expectations and work results
- Transport: 56%
- Healthcare: 43%
Risks determined

Frequent changes
- Transport: 19%
- Healthcare: 43%

Night and shift work
- Transport: 31%
- Healthcare: 57%
Risks determined

Unsatisfactory relations between personnel
- Transport: 56%
- Healthcare: 43%

Intimidation, threats and violence
- Transport: 19%
- Healthcare: 57%
At 57% of healthcare establishments which performed an assessment of psychosocial risk factors, risks due to violence, intimidation and threats, as well as due to night and shift work were identified.

Defining traits of violence at work:

• violence by third parties, i.e. the perpetrator is not a co-worker or a colleague
• violence directed at workers on the basis of their work
• hazard posed to the worker’s health or safety: there is intent to harm the victim, or the perpetrator cannot control themselves (e.g. under the influence of drugs)
Accidents at work

Accidents at work due to violence

Workplace accidents at healthcare establishments
All workplace accidents

95%

18%

5%

82%