
P48. CHEMICAL EXPOSURE IN TURKISH CHILDREN WORKING IN FURNITURE AND SHOES MAKING SECTORS

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Furniture and shoes making sectors are highly worker oriented and children aged 15-17 years who are engaged in hazardous working. Working children are exposed to dangerous chemicals especially solvents. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore young workers' perceptions of health and safety hazards of chemical substances in their work-places.

The study involved 24 young workers engaged in painting varnishing and gluing process in micro or small enterprises. Interviews with children were conducted for collecting qualitative data. The interviews allowed participants spontaneously to share information on open-ended questions. The collecting information was analyzed qualitatively using tabulation.

All of the participants were males, the mean age was 15.5 ± 1.2 years old (12-17). Mean working hour was 11.8 ± 0.8 / day (10-14). All of the working children were out of school and living in urban slum. Most of the children were smoking. All of the workers stated that they receive insufficient occupational exposure information. Furniture workers reported that their workplaces had ventilation systems and only one of workers used protective masks while at work. But all of the shoes making workers reported that their work-places had no ventilation systems and they had no protective equipments. When asked about what work-related health risk they might face, all of the participants referred to dust and chemical agents. Children reported major health problems due to the dust and chemical inhalation were coughs, headaches, skin complaints, irritability and dizziness.

Participants were aware of the potential dangers of exposing to chemical substances and worried about the effects of chemical substances on their health.

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