Skin Health Surveillance: Making it effective and beneficial

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Skin Health Surveillance: Making it effective and beneficial

• Why do skin health surveillance

• Key available methods
  • Questionnaires
  • Visual assessment
  • Skin condition measurement

• How can it be used

• Building effective systems
Why Bother?

• For a complete skin management system
• Our ‘Early warning’
• Regulatory requirements
• Economic implications
• Social effects

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Key Methods

• Questionnaires
• Visual Assessment
• Skin Condition Measurement
Why a questionnaire is important

• To gain background information
• To provide information in a structured manner for analysis
• To ensure that all aspects are covered
• To ensure compliance with the regulations
• To raise awareness
• To help decide if a problem is occupational or not
• Gives time for acclimatisation and relaxation of the test subject
When to use a questionnaire

• Every time a skin health assessment is made
• When carrying out pre-placement assessment
• For skin health surveillance and monitoring

More than one questionnaire may be needed
Information in a questionnaire

• Name
• Occupation
• Age
• Male/female
• Right or left handed
• Description of work done

• Use of personal protective equipment
• Frequency of PPE use
• Frequency of chemical contact
• Skin Problems – current or previous
• Allergies?
• Medically Confirmed?
Information in a questionnaire

• Use of moisturiser
• Frequency of moisturiser use
• Skin care and cosmetic products used
• Housework??
• Dishwasher??
• Gloves for housework??
• Gloves at any other time??
• Hobbies
• Other non work activities
• Second job?
Suggested uses of the information

• To advise an individual
• To distinguish between occupational and non-occupational skin problems
• In management reports (e.g. to support the need for action)
• Identifying system weaknesses so that they can be addressed
• To provide supporting data for medical referral
Visual Assessment

• Visual and tactile examination of the skin
• Scoring system
  • Osnabrück scoring system
  • Simple scoring systems
• Comparison chart
Visual Assessment

😊
Quick
Inexpensive
Can be done ‘on-site’
Valid for all visible skin conditions

😊
Subjective, no quantitative data
Requires experience/training
May not indicate sub-clinical damage
Surface conditions do not always correlate with conditions in the skin

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Skin Condition Assessment

• Uses scientific equipment to measure skin parameters
• Different parameters build a picture of the condition of the skin
  • Transepidermal water loss
  • Skin hydration
  • Skin colour/pigmentation
  • pH
Important parameters

• Transepidermal Water Loss (TEWL)
  • Barrier function

• Skin Hydration

• Skin Colour (erythema)
  • Quantify rash

• Skin pH
  • Microorganism barrier
Skin Condition Assessment

Non-invasive
Simple measurement methods
Quantitative data
May indicate sub-clinical damage
Can build a picture of skin condition

Only valid for certain skin conditions
Measurements can’t be made everywhere
How can it be used?

• Pre-placement assessment
• Identifying problem areas
• Health surveillance/monitoring
• Assessing intervention
• Investigating a problem
Setting up a skin health surveillance system

• Decide which techniques are relevant for your organisation
• Decide how you will use the techniques
• Set out what you will do and when
Increasing Resources: The importance of responsible people

- Only brief training required
- More frequent skin checks
- Non health and safety qualified personnel
  - Line manager
  - First aider
- Report those with problems
- Advise to seek assistance
Skin Health Surveillance System

• Involve colleagues to improve resources
• Set up a system including
  • Questionnaire
  • Visual assessment
  • Skin condition measurement
• Ensure regular monitoring of all employees
  • The frequency will depend on your organisation, the work carried out, and the number of employees
  • The more frequent the better particularly where exposure is to irritant chemicals or work situations

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Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

If you think of any questions later, please feel free to contact us

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