

Occupational asthma in Korean electronics workers caused by colophony fumes : prevalence and preventive measures

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-Abstract-

Electronic soldering workers who are exposed to colophony fumes contained in soldering fluxes can develop occupational asthma. It is known that the prevalence of colophony-induced occupational asthma ranges from 4 % in low-exposure populations to 20 % in more heavily exposed worker groups. But as there has been no report about colophony-induced

occupational asthma in Korea, 78 electronic workers were investigated to estimate the prevalence of colophony-induced occupational asthma in Korea.

The results were as follows :

1. By history, 3 workers complained asthmatic symptoms, and two of them were related to work.
2. The positivity of skin prick test with common inhalant allergens was 42 % of study populations, but only one worker who did not complain asthmatic symptoms was sensitized to colophony extract.
3. None of them showed bronchial hyperresponsiveness to methacholine.

In conclusion, because soldering process in electronic factories are automatically processed and electronic workers are exposed to a little colophony fume, we couldn't find any case of colophony-induced occupational asthma in workers of electronic factories in Korea.