

Dal passato al futuro: insegnamenti e aspettative. La ricerca clinica nel campo delle malattie professionali

L. RIBOLDI

Dipartimento di Medicina del Lavoro "Clinica del Lavoro Luigi Devoto", Università degli Studi di Milano. Azienda Ospedaliera Istituti Clinici di Perfezionamento di Milano

KEY WORDS

Work-related disease; the clinical method; clinical research

SUMMARY

«From the past to the future: lessons and expectations. Clinical research in work-related diseases». The past provides us with important lessons on which to found expectations and future perspectives for our discipline. The scenario of our activities and workplaces is dramatically changing and as a consequence the associated health risks, as well as medical and scientific knowledge on possible effects and impairment and the possibility to document them, the method being however always the same, i.e. the clinical method. Clinical observation leads to the assumption of etiological link and the pathogenetic mechanism of effect, development of adequate diagnostic tools and implementation of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation interventions. Only by sticking to this method, will occupational health be able to continue its function of worker's health protection and continuing education and training of new occupational physicians. In this sense the present and future of clinical research in occupational health is in fact organic development of the lessons of the past which addresses today's work situations using the new potentialities provided by medical knowledge.