

# Indagine sullo stato di salute di ex-esposti ad agenti cancerogeni di una vetreria industriale

ORIANA ROSSI, L. TURINI, ELISABETTA CHELLINI\*, C. BUONOCORE, ANNA MARIA LOI

UO Prevenzione Igiene e Salute nei Luoghi di Lavoro, Azienda USL 6 Livorno

\* UO Epidemiologia Ambientale-Occupazionale, CSPO, Istituto Scientifico della Regione Toscana, Firenze

## KEY WORDS

Health surveillance; cancer; glass workers

## SUMMARY

**«Survey on health status of workers exposed in the past to carcinogens in a glass factory in Leghorn, Italy».**  
**Background:** For a few years now in Italy there has been wide discussion on the advisability of developing health surveillance programmes for workers who were exposed to occupational carcinogens in the past (incompliance with Italian D.Lgs. 626/94, art. No. 69). The purpose of the present paper was to contribute to the discussion on operative guidelines for public or private Occupational Health Services intending to address this issue. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was undertaken on former workers of a glass factory located in Leghorn, Italy. Six hundred and seventy-seven workers discharged in the period 1/1/1942 - 30/6/1992, with at least 1 year of service, resident in the area of Leghorn, were identified from the personnel records of the company and invited to medical examination at the local public Occupational Health Service. A structured questionnaire was developed in order to standardize the collection of occupational and health histories. **Results:** 370 subjects were examined and for each of them occupational and health histories were collected. Occupational exposure to carcinogens in the factory in the last decades was reconstructed using the workers' occupational histories and the available plant records: 3 periods with different production activities (1942/49, 1950/69, 1970/92), and 4 main carcinogens (asbestos, PAH, silica and glass fibres) were identified. Thirty cancers were recorded and 10 of these were occupationally related. **Conclusions:** The health survey allowed occupational exposures to carcinogens to be defined in a factory where historical environmental data were not available. It was also possible to assess individual past occupational risk and provide information to each former worker on his risk, on available preventive measures, and on possible diagnostic, therapeutic and insurance procedures available in relation to diseases related to the different hazards. Via this survey it was also possible to identify and notify the Italian Institute of Insurance against Occupational Diseases and Accidents of 6 cases of bladder cancer, i.e., cancers with long survival that would be impossible to identify via current health data bases.

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Corrispondenza: Dr. Oriana Rossi, UO Prevenzione Igiene e Sicurezza nei Luoghi di Lavoro, Azienda USL 6, Via della Bastia 12, Livorno, Azienda USL 6 Livorno - Tel. 0586/223966 0586/223988 - Fax 0586/223961 - E-mail: o.rossi@usl6.toscana.it

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