

# Punture di imenotteri negli agenti del corpo forestale dello stato: valutazione del rischio

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## KEY WORDS

Hymenoptera stings; systemic reactions; forestry department agents; health surveillance

## SUMMARY

«*Hymenoptera stings in forestry department agents: evaluation of risk*». **Background:** *In sensitized subjects Hymenoptera stings may provoke the awakening of mediated systemic reactions of I type IgE, which can sometimes be serious. Considering the type of work performed activity and the high frequency of reported hymenoptera sting episodes, a sample of 206 Forestry Department agents was surveyed who worked outside urban areas in the Marche Region.* **Objectives:** *The aim of the study was to analyse the prevalence of stings and their possible systemic reactions, as well as to evaluate the type of occupational risks involved.* **Methods:** *A total of 206 agents were examined and questioned about the number of stings suffered during work and about the kind of subsequent skin and systemic reactions; they were then classified according to the method proposed by H.L. Mueller.* **Results:** *179 agents reported having suffered from hymenoptera stings and, of these, 53 subjects (29,6%) remembered that one episode at least occurred during work. Among 175 operators (98%), 4 had a regular reaction, with appearance of a generalized urticaria and uneasiness. In the remaining 4 agents (2%) there was a local extensive reaction, which was not associated with systemic reactions and they were all referred to allergological examination. 19 agents (10,6%) suffered more than 5 stings altogether, but none developed a systemic reaction. 87% of the subjects practised self-medication, 7% reported to the casualty department of the local hospital or to their own doctor, and 6% undertook no cure at all.* **Conclusions:** *Epidemiological studies agree in recognizing that, in the general population, the percentage of systemic reactions after one or more hymenoptera stings varies from 0,15% to 3,3%. In categories of workers occupationally at risk, the prevalence of systemic reactions varies from 4,5% to 26%. The prevalence of systemic reactions in Forestry Department agents was 2%, which is similar to the prevalence in the general population. Therefore, rather than occupational risk, there appeared to be a generic risk made more serious by working conditions for Forestry Department agents due to their possible exposure to hymenoptera stings. The occupational health physician needs to monitor these events, due to the fact that frequent exposure to stings, above all occurring within a short period of time (less than two months) favours an increase in the tendency to develop systemic reactions, with a more serious prognosis, especially when working in isolated conditions.*