

# Applicazione di un programma di educazione sanitaria in un campione di apprendisti acconciatori

MICHELA CRIPPA, D. TORRI, LAURA FOGLIATA, L. BELLERI, L. ALESSIO

Dipartimento di Medicina Sperimentale e Applicata, Sezione di Medicina del Lavoro, Università degli Studi di Brescia, Azienda Spedali Civili di Brescia

## KEY WORDS

Hairdressing trainees; occupational risks; prevention; educational programme

## SUMMARY

**«Implementation of a health education programme in a sample of hairdressing trainees».** **Background:** Skin and respiratory diseases and upper limb cumulative trauma disorders are common in practising hairdressers but unfortunately also in hairdressing trainees. Recent data showed that prevention by education in this working area is of fundamental importance. **Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge that hairdressing trainees have of the risks present in their workplaces and to apply and verify the efficacy of a specific educational programme. **Methods:** The programme was aimed at hairdressing trainees, aged from 15 to 21 years, attending 3 technical schools. The school training was part-time (1 day per week) and was completed in 3 years. Educational meetings were organized during the first year (154 students participated) and two years later at the end of the school training (only 83 students completed the training). The programme included a booklet and 3 self-administered questionnaires: one for the assessment of risks knowledge, work-related symptoms and preventive measures adopted, one for the assessment of long-term learning and one, after two years, for the assessment of changes in daily hairdressing practice, symptoms and preventive measures. **Results:** At the beginning of the school training all the trainees were working as apprentices, only 76% reported using gloves (powdered latex gloves in 90% of cases) none used respiratory protective devices, 22.7% were atopic. 39% reported work-related skin lesions, 19.5% work-related rhinitis, 5.8% work-related conjunctivitis, 0.6% asthma, 9.1% work-related low back pain and 2.6% shoulder and/or elbow pain. At the end of school training most of the trainees were performing advanced procedures such as hair-drying and cutting instead of shampooing, dyeing and perming; almost all reported using gloves during technical activities and the use of non-latex gloves and skin care products increased; the percentage of work-related skin symptoms was significantly lower but the percentage of work-related musculoskeletal disorders was significantly higher. **Conclusions:** At the end of school training hairdressing trainees have a better knowledge of work-related risks and the importance of their prevention. Some changes in hairdressing practice (e.g. use of gloves, barrier creams, skin care products) and procedures were evident and were associated with a decrease in work-related dermatitis; in this field the efficacy of specific educational programmes is significant. Nevertheless the increase in musculoskeletal disorders, probably related to the increase in performing advanced procedures (e.g. hair drying or cutting) often characterized by unsafe postures and few rest breaks, could be reduced only if employers too are involved and informed on practical aspects of prevention since, for these risk factors, changes in workplace and work organization are required.