

Awareness and Practices about Silicosis among the Sandstone Quarry Workers in Desert Ecology of Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

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KEYWORDS Awareness. Practice. Silicosis. Sandstone Quarry Worker. Thar Desert

ABSTRACT Silicosis is the oldest recorded chronic challenging public health problem globally and particularly in developing countries. Disease silicosis is not curable. Prevention of silicosis is the only option for its control. Community awareness towards silicosis becomes more important tool in this situation. A cross-sectional study was conducted using questionnaire technique to assess awareness and practices regarding silicosis among the sand stone quarry workers in Jodhpur district of Rajasthan. Majority (73.1%) of the workers were from Meghwal and Bheel communities. Literacy status of the respondents was 28.5%. About two- third (69.9%) of the sandstone quarry workers were aware of the causes of silicosis and this proportion increased with the literacy status, 65.8% in illiterate to 95.7% in middle school and above education. About one- third (32.7%) of the sand stone quarry workers reported cough with breathlessness as the most important symptom of silicosis and this also increased with the literacy status of the respondents (22.3% in illiterate to 73.9% in highly literate. Majority of the respondents knew that silica produced by dry drilling, followed by removing overburdens, making manual holes, separating stone slabs, loading and unloading, blasting rocks and velocity of winds were the main cause of silicosis. All most all the sandstone quarry workers were not using any preventive measures for the silica inhalation through respiration due to lack of awareness about silicosis. Continuous effort is needed to make them aware about causation, sign and symptoms, preventive measures and management of disease.