

Awareness on Occupational Hazards and Utilization of Personal Protective Equipment Among Sawmill Workers in Ebonyi State

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Abstract

Sawmill workers are exposed to a high prevalence of respiratory symptoms attributed to poor usage of personal protective equipment and safety practices. The study established that the level of knowledge and awareness among the sawmill workers contributed to the occupational hazards faced at work in Ebonyi State. Instrument of data collection adopted was structured questionnaire and interview method. Data collected were analyzed and the research questions were answered using thematic analysis. The major factors that affected usage of personal protective equipment among the workers are poor level of knowledge on occupational hazards and safety practices which has its negative consequences on family, community and government budgeting. It was reported that the awareness on safety guidelines and adherence to these practices was very low. Workers were exposed to various hazards, including wood dust, noise and chemical agents at different degrees at the workplace. The findings showed that the sawmill clusters indicated that most workers are faced with various degree of a high rate of backache, headache, cough, catarrh, skin rashes, eye injuries, asthma and other respiratory problem in addition to physical injuries like bruises, loss of lives, wounds and amputation. The study concluded that the use and adoption of safety equipment such as personal protective devices can either be worn or applied to reduce the chances of accident or injury to take place at the workplace. The study suggested that there is urgent need for health education, safety training, and strict enforcement of safety protocols to mitigate occupational hazards and enhance the well-being of sawmill workers in the state.