



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR IMPROVING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH IN MOLDOVA

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Introduction. Working conditions and occupation are important determinants of health at the social level. Every year, almost 1.3 million people die from a work-related disease in the G20 countries and about 221,000 suffer a fatal occupational accident.

Socio-economic instability in the Republic of Moldova in the last 30 years has resulted in negative repercussions on public health, which are characterized by excessive mortality of the working age population, low birth rate, negative natural increase. With regard to the health status of the working population, it is worth mentioning the practical reduction to zero of cases of occupational diseases against the background of constant growth of jobs that do not meet occupational health standards: by microclimate factors (38.4%), by intensity of noise (25.7%) and tremors (8.6%), by content of toxic substances (11.5%) and dust (9.7%). It should also be noted that in regular medical examinations of workers exposed to risk factors, on average only up to 3% are detected with work-related disease, while WHO experts claim that at least 35% of employees suffer from chronic diseases that require surveillance.

Recently, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova ratified the ILO Convention Nr.161 on occupational health services. The ratification settings require elaboration of policies, legislation and a national program related to health and safety at the workplace. At present, the Republic of Moldova is facing essential challenges in organizing its Occupational Health services.

Material and methods. An international collaborative network was set up between Moldova, Italy and Hungary, resulting in the elaboration of the Project „Improving Occupational Health and Safety System in Republic of Moldova”.

The project involves the assessment of the most appropriate research methodologies for estimating risk factors due to occupational exposures. Also, it implies studying and assessment of the national legislative and normative acts in order to facilitate implementation of ILO Convention No. 161. The curriculum of the occupational health disciplines in medical education institutions will be reviewed in order to highlight the weaknesses in the local education. Communication, dissemination, skill developing, and knowledge sharing will be integral parts of the project.

Results. Occupational health and safety specialists from the Republic of Moldova will benefit directly from a new type of working experience – "learning through research", in accordance with European and international regulations. In the long term, this trilateral collaboration will lead to the development of research and communication programs on the European scale. The project will help to provide more data on the current state of occupational health and safety fields in the Republic of Moldova. Also, the partnership with Republic of Moldova will create opportunities to share Italian and Hungarian experiences in occupational health and safety.

Conclusions. Collaboration and partnership bring benefits to both beneficiary and knowledge sharing countries.