

37 Functional Requirements to Develop a new Risk Assessment Model for Exposure to Biological Agents

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Abstract

Within Occupational Risk Prevention, the assessment of risks due to exposure to biological agents has received little attention compared to risks such as those arising from chemicals. This was the case until the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of health effects related to exposure to biological agents in the work environment. However, the tools for hazard inventory, risk assessment, and implementation of control measures for biological agents are scarce. There are many reasons that make it challenging for OHS professionals to assess the exposure to biological agents such as, little knowledge on the biological agents potentially present in the different economic activities, their effects on health, the lack of standardized methods for quantitative sampling or the lack of reference values available for most biological agents. Different qualitative risk assessment tools for biological agents have been developed over the last decades. Some examples are the Simplified Evaluation of the INSSST (Spain), the Biogaval-Neo of the INVASSAT (Spain), the Bioaerosol Tool of the IRSST (Canada) or the RIE Method of the NKAL (The Netherlands). These tools differ from each other in terms of their scope and the parameters used to determine risk and were compared in order to better understand their limitations and applicability. After the comparison was carried out some additional specific parameters have been proposed as



essential for the development of this new model. The proposed improvements could be implemented in the development of a new qualitative biological risk assessment model in the Stoffenmanager® tool.

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