

DP Gross et al. Occ. Env. Med (2006) Vol.63 p 404 – 410

Does functional capacity evaluation predict recovery in workers' compensation claimants with upper extremity disorders?

No.

Compensators usually feel more comfortable with objective evidence of functional capacity limitations. However, the prognostic value of such evidence is not validated in practice. This study was prospective in design and of a significant cohort size. Neither for obvious injury e.g. fracture or, unexplained injury e.g. RSI did evaluation provide useful information.

Epidemiology (2006) Vol. 17 p 506 – 511

Transient Exposure to Coffee as a Trigger of a First Nonfatal Myocardial Infarction

Myocardial infarction was more likely in the hour after coffee consumption. The effect was much greater in those who rarely drank coffee [OR = 4 (95% CI = 2.0 to 8.4)] and insignificant in heavy consumers.

[Editor's note: some jurisdictions provide liability style compensation for heart attacks which occur during work time]

H Nishiura et al. Epidemiology (2006) Vol. 17 p 576 – 581

Still Protected Against Smallpox? Estimation of the Duration of Vaccine-Induced Immunity Against Smallpox

This was a study of several smallpox outbreaks and the time since vaccination. Median duration of protection from disease ranged from 11.7 to 28.4 years after primary vaccination and was found to follow a pattern similar to that of radioactive decay.

[Editor's note, workers who are expected to cope with exposure to smallpox had better be revaccinated (possibly) every 10 years, partial immunity presents significant problems for disease containment]

MMWR Weekly August 18th (2006)

Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance --- United States, 2003--2004

Blood lead levels greater than 25 µg/dL are of concern. The national rate in 2003 for resident adults was 8.2 per 100,000 employed population aged ≥16 years and, in 2004, it declined to 7.5 per 100,000. During 2003--2004, non-occupational sources represented 6% of the annual average of adults with BLLs ≥25 µg/dL.

[Editor's note: raised blood lead levels are very probably occupational in origin. Lead disease estimates (for the USA) could be based in this data].

Federal Institute for Risk Assessment. Press release 31st Aug 2006.

Indications that styrene has a tumorigenic effect in humans

Toxicology in mice shows styrene decomposes in lung tissue to form a mouse carcinogen; styrene oxide. The enzyme required has not previously been found in man. IARC have decided that styrene is possibly a human carcinogen. It's a known irritant with an 8 hour WEL of 100 ppm (430 mgm⁻³). Most other EC countries (with a view) set much lower limits; a factor of 5 lower, The USA approximately mirrors the view taken by the UK.

GESTIS international database on hazardous substances

The database contains exposure limit values from around the world. There are over 1000 chemicals described.

<http://www.hvbg.de/e/bia/gestis/stoffdb/index.html>

Environment Agency Press Release 17th August 2006.

Fire & Rescue Service's role in pollution prevention recognised

To note: Fire services are now being supplied with equipment designed to contain fluid run off from fire and other incidents. There are no stated plans for dealing with dispersal of radioactive dusts.

