A study of EPIDERM reporting of cases associated with exposure to chromate/cement between 2002 and 2009

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ABSTRACT

Aims and Objectives: This study aimed to determine the characteristics of skin disease associated with exposure to chromates/cement in cases reported to EPIDERM from 2002 to 2009 by analysing and comparing the characteristics of the cases by job, industry and reporter. It also aimed to determine whether there has been a change in the number of reported cases with OCD in the construction industry following change in legislation in the UK prohibiting the use of cement containing high levels of chromium VI.

Background: Chromium and its compound are known to cause contact dermatitis which can be occupational. Cement has been known to be a major source of allergy to chromates in the construction industry. Attempts made to reduce exposure to chromates in cement have had noticeable successes in the Scandinavian countries. The use of cement with high levels of chromium VI has subsequently been banned in EU member countries. This ban came into effect in the UK in 2005.

Method: Data of all cases of OCD associated with exposure to chromates/cement reported to EPIDERM between 2002 and 2009 were extracted from the EPIDERM data bank and analysed using SPSS software.

Results: The results showed that ACD was the most commonly reported OCD in both sexes and in the 30-45 and 45-60 age groups and by both core and sample reporters. The majority of the OCD cases were from the construction industry. There was a statistically significant drop in the number of OCD cases reported after the change in legislation but other factors could also account for the drop.

Conclusion: ACD remains the highest form of OCD in cases associated with exposure to chromates/cement. The rate of reported OCD cases associated with exposure to chromates/cement shows a fall after the change in legislation.