To determine the prevalence of dermatoses among workers in the offshore oil drilling industry in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Working on offshore drilling industries involves many tasks; there is considerable risk of exposure to hazards and conditions which could cause skin problems.

Aims:

1. To estimate the prevalence of occupational skin disease among workers in the offshore drilling industry in Nigeria.
2. To consider the relationship between the occurrence of skin disease and work activity.
3. To identify measures which may help in reducing work related skin diseases.

Methodology: A cross sectional survey of workers in an offshore drilling rig in Nigeria was undertaken using a self-completed anonymised questionnaire.

Results: The study shows 65[66.3%] of respondents having had skin problems. Most symptoms are said to occur in the lower limb contrary to finding from other studies.

The finding shows 43[43.9%] of respondents attributing their skin problem to workplace hazards and conditions. Non occupational factors are also contributory; 16 [16.3%] of responders reported having skin problem prior to working offshore, 7[7.1%] of the respondents attributing theirs to non-work hazard and 23.5% of the respondents reported having past history of allergy.

46[46.9%] of respondents reported having their skin problem worsened during working hours, while 45[45.9%] reported having improvement during time off work. 1% of respondents were further investigated, and [54.1%] received some form of treatment for their skin problem. Only 2% of the responders reported being off work due to skin problems.
Recommendations:

1. Employers to formulate and incorporate skin disease protection programmes as part of their health and safety policies.
2. To raise awareness of occupational dermatoses among workers.
3. Train workers to recognise symptoms and signs of occupational dermatoses.
4. Further referral and investigation should be made, if necessary, e.g. for dermatologist assessment and patch testing.

Keywords: Occupational dermatoses; skin diseases; skin problems; offshore industries