

Workshop **Tackling challenges of occupational skin diseases (OSD) in Europe** **(Bern, 7 -8 April 2014)**

Summary

Day 1 (7 April 2014)

The chair provided an overview of important achievements and forthcoming activities. The main focus of the chair's intervention was to make clear that more awareness and action is needed with regard to occupational skin cancer since it is important to improve protection of workers in UV exposure. In January 2014, the chair furthermore attended a meeting in Brussels with the Social Dialogue, which is offering to the social partners of risk professions scientific advice and cooperation with the Action. The Construction and Woodwork union is interested in the topic of occupational skin diseases bearing in mind that OSD prevail in the construction industry.

Forthcoming activities:

- ✓ COST seminar on "Etiology and prevention of occupational contact dermatitis: New challenges", 24 June 2014 in Barcelona, prior the ESCD Congress. The event consists of two parts: a moderated poster session and the seminar with presentations and discussion.
- ✓ Applications for HORIZON 2020 under the PHC 4.
- ✓ World Congress on Safety and Health (Francfort, 25-28 August 2014), Symposium on occupational skin diseases – good platform to network.
- ✓ ICOH Congress in 31.5. – 5.6.2015 in Seoul, South Korea: excellent platform to highlight the importance of OSD amongst occupational physicians and further establish collaboration with WHO.

Status report and exchange on activities of WGs

WG1 – Irena Angelova Fischer, vice-chair

During first grant year, WG 1 met twice. A number of activities are underway:

- ✓ Set up parameters (list is not exhaustive) on : Cytokines, AMP, Lipids, pH, NMF
- ✓ Prepared an inventory of resources : current and future projects
- ✓ Studies on i) The role of protection gloves on the skin barrier; ii) Hardening phenomenon
- ✓ 3 reviews
- ✓ 2 STSM have been carried out within the WG members
- ✓ WG 1 will organize a training school on occupational contact dermatitis from 15-17 April 2015 in Split, Croatia
- ✓ Agreement within the group that more basic research is needed to better understand mechanisms on e.g. how allergic contact dermatitis works. What is an eczema? What are the unique features of the various forms of eczema? Are there common denominators? This is a pre-requisite for developing targeted prevention activities, e.g. creams. Currently, global technologies and proteomics are used to identify biomarkers and mechanistic pathways. Come up with a prediction signature would help toxicology. Another issue where little is known concern irritant signals.

WG 2 – John English, vice-chair

The working group allocated tasks to prepare a systematic review on the prevailing definitions, diagnostic and classification systems and general principles (e.g. risk assessment, exposure, return-to-work, compensation rules) in the different EU countries. While going through each country's social insurance system at the meeting in Barcelona presented by the various WG members, the variation of the schemes and the patient management became very obvious.

The main task will be to write a position paper, which comprises all replies received through a questionnaire by end of September 2014.

What needs further to be elucidated is: What standards are we aiming at? And the group should look at what standards people would recommend in each country, for instance using protective creams.

WG 3 – George Sorin Tiplica, chair

The working group will focus its activities on developing intervention studies in high risk professions and experimental studies in human volunteers. One special group of attention will be outdoor workers. It was decided to match a number of activities undertaken within countries, e.g. between Romania and Austria and so forth. The working group also started drafting an application for HORIZON 2020 under the PHC 4 topic "Health, demographic change and well-being". Furthermore, a position paper concerning UV induced occupational skin cancer in Romania is being prepared by Carmen Salavastru.

The group addressed in addition two main problems: namely, how to decrease the number of underreporting of OSD, which is common to all countries. How could this challenge be tackled? By undertaking awareness raising campaigns? How to involve politicians and other stakeholders? Several strategies are to be discussed by the group. The second main problem concerns the lack of money for research activities. The importance of applying for EU and national projects became apparent. In this context, the chair briefly presented the planned campaign in the Parliament in Romania to enhance discussion with stakeholders (meanwhile successfully conducted from 13 to 15 May 2014). Attention was also drawn to the controlled intervention studies in various high risk professions carried out in Romania since 2013. And, another group which needs special attention is farmers. It is therefore proposed to undertake a study to evaluate the spectrum and incidence of professional dermatoses in rural areas as well as the impact of sun exposure on photo-aging skin and skin cancers, and to look into the incidence of skin infections in relation with agriculture and farming. In addition, information campaigns about the risk factors involved in occupational dermatoses and protection methods should be undertaken.

WG 4 – Wolfgang Uter, chair

The group is focusing on five activities:

- ✓ "Third version of an extended ESSCA documentation of occupational cases": it comprises a minimum data set on patient history and has so far worked well; however it would be equally important to extend the information for instance with regard to time exposure of wet work during work/non work and have a matrix of that information. This could lead a questionnaire for the patient to be filled out to get a profile. And this could be extended to contact with other liquids. The chair welcomes feedback from other working groups for any other proposals.
- ✓ Hair cosmetics patch test series results available from ESSCA (no opting out): It is important to address special patch test programmes such as for instance hairdressers' series in ESSCA. This would be a good starting point in terms of test series. It is suggested to include other countries (e.g. France) and have patch test results. The information gathered could be compiled in a publication, followed by critical appraisals. This will be a mid-term project.

- ✓ New official catalogue of job titles: ISCO-occupational coding is being revised every 20 years. The 2008 revision (ISCO-08) has become available and mandatory for reporting purposes in the EU. There is little alternative to changing to the new, partly improved version from some deadline onwards. Retrospective mapping is 95% without problems, however (guesstimated) 5% problem cases.
- ✓ Data collection for review of pathways in co-operation with WG 2: The objective is to analyse the current status in various countries. Information is gathered by means of a questionnaire with 45 items, which is available online (accessible through a link). As there is some overlap with WG 2, it has been decided to pull forces together to get the information jointly. To that end, a combined meeting between WG 2 and 3 is envisaged in Amsterdam.
- ✓ Study proposal to develop modules for exposure analysis to metals (for studies/routine): it is proposed to undertake first an exposure analysis 100-200 nickel allergic patients (pilot study) and to e.g. examine hand staining after handling objects and elucidate the amount of nickel which actually touches the skin. If valuable information was obtained from the pilot, the results could be published.
- ✓ Patch testing with gloves: some working group members are highly interested to look into this issue. How to obtain information on ingredients and possibly patch test them in a second step needs to be clarified. Maybe by providing a short protocol and check list for those working in the field could be helpful.
- ✓ Vision 2020: occupational material largely lack a declaration of ingredients. INCI labelling is limited. It would be very useful to know which allergens are in a product and thus would need a full declaration of ingredients. However, how realistic is this to be achieved? A full declaration of ingredients would be an important mid-term goal, greatly aiding diagnostic work-up and secondary prevention in contact allergic workers.

WG 5 – Ulrike Bollmann, vice-chair

Recalling the working groups' assignment to develop a dissemination strategy of relevant knowledge developed throughout the lifespan of StanDerm, the vice-chair elaborated on the various dissemination elements. It is important to determine which content should be disseminated to whom. A number of key questions are to be addressed in this context: Do we have sensitivity to the consumer concerns? Can we guarantee the credibility of the outcome? Is the utility of the knowledge clear to the user? Does the user perceive the results as relevant for him/herself? Are our research results accessible, e.g. via StanDerm website? Is the website user-friendly? The funnel (see annex 5) seems most appropriate to get to grips with this complexity as it consists of 3 user levels (expert, multiplier, public). While the most difficult group to reach is the public, the patients, people in general outside of the COST structures, one challenge is already to enhance cooperation among all working groups and to ensure that knowledge dissemination amongst the project itself takes place. This could be further developed through the questionnaire sent by the WG 5 to all Action members with a view to enabling more networking and exchange.

Another challenge is to have a user-friendly StanDerm website targeting (for the time being) mainly experts and multipliers, which was launched on the same day of the meeting (7 April). The site consists of various modules and will be continuously improved. Information will need to be added on a regular basis. It is not excluded that the structure may have to be adapted to the changing needs (by topical approach rather than by working groups, add a news blog, and so forth). The co-chair furthermore commented briefly on the logo and then asked all working groups to inform the WG on new knowledge that could be posted on the website.

The domain chair, Branko Bugarski, congratulated the working group for the very well designed webpage. He recommended to add the MoU, to inform on the outcome of the workshops, to stress on the network and to highlight the STSM.

Social Dialogue in the construction sector, European Construction Industry Federation-European Federation of Building and woodworkers (FIEC-EFBWW), Working Group

"Health & Safety" meeting in Brussels : Jelena Macan presented StanDerm during that meeting. The focus was on occupational skin diseases in the construction industry and possible joint activities with StanDerm. The challenges in the construction sector are still enormous. There is a raising awareness that the costs caused by occupational diseases are meanwhile higher than those caused by an injury. Training is hence a central element in the occupational safety and health culture. She emphasized that StanDerm is an excellent platform for the exchange with social partners and that StanDerm comprises a unique pool of expertise. While the employers do not see skin problems as a priority, the workers were interested in furthering discussions and exchange with StanDerm with a view to reaching new social partner projects. The working group will undertake a project called SCAFFOLD: it will collect, review and analyse relevant quantitative and qualitative information and data on current strategies, methods and tools for workers protection against manufacturing nano-materials, in order to identify needs and gaps for proper risk management.

Raising awareness through the EADV campaign: The chair briefly showcased the effects of targeted activities, including campaigns. He used recent data generated in Germany, which show that (also) due to the awareness raising campaign carried out every year since 2009, the reduction of rehabilitation costs and compensation have reduced by 75% in the hairdressers industry. Notifications, on the other hand, increased since 2009 leading to a decrease of underreporting. During the yearly one-week campaign, free-of-charge dermatological consultations are being offered to patients. Another example is Serbia, where every last week of October an occupational safety and health week is carried out at national level. The chair also mentioned the skin cancer awareness day as one successful targeted activity.

Francesca Larese expressed interest in writing a position paper on the spread of latex powdered gloves and to carry out an intervention study.

Training Schools: The first training school will be organized from 15-17 April 2015 in Split, Croatia.

Keynote lectures: Day 1 ended with two keynote lectures on "New principles in protective creams", presented by Stefan Martin and on "Biomarkers", presented by Kilian Eyerich.

DAY 2 (8 April 2014) was devoted to the prevention of occupational skin cancer. Various aspects were highlighted by the four presentations:

i) Christian Surber ´s (Switzerland) presentation focused on skin protection behavior, in particular with regard to outdoor workers, including their knowledge and attitudes. A systematic review of cross-sectional and interventional studies clearly showed that about 20 per cent of information provided is wrong or even misleading. The effectiveness of counselling interventions seem to have rather modest effects. However, an intervention study to measure the effectiveness of computerized support providing tailored patient education indicates positive results and gives hope that this might influence behavior and attitudes.

ii) Marc Wittlich (Germany) presented a joint project in Germany on skin tumors induced by natural UV radiation – development and evaluation of criteria to distinguish between occupational and non-occupational causation. To that end, 2400 test persons will be examined over a period of 2 years. Information will be gathered via a questionnaire on medical and technical aspects and via measurement of exposure at the workplace by means of a specifically developed technical device (GENESIS-UV: Generation and Extraction System for individual exposure) for this project. The equipment costs roughly EURO 3 000 per unit. First results are expected by 2015. Units are available.

Participating in the project is suggested and financing could be via EADV project #18 (healthy skin@work campaign).

iii) Emilie Van Deventer (WHO) presented what WHO is presently undertaking with regard to UV radiation. The main objective of WHO is to intensify primary prevention. WHO thus looks into policies and practices as well as into risk communication aspects and information provision. WHO led process of defining exposure limits in outdoor workers (UN guidelines). WHO would be ready to support StanDerm's activities regarding UV radiation.

iv) Carmen Salavastru's (chair of sub-group on occupational skin cancer) presentation emphasized that when looking into occupational skin cancer, one should not lose sight of the fact that it can be induced by many types of agents, which need to be identified. There are thus many aspects the task force has to deal with. She proposed to have a scientific committee for the sub-group on occupational skin cancer because support is needed from researchers in addition to the knowledge of clinicians brought into the group. It was proposed to produce a position paper, which assesses the incidence of occupational skin cancer and the present laws and regulations. The input provided by the members to produce the document elaborated by WG 2 and WG 4 should be used. Maybe some additional questions on this very specific topic could be added? This will be discussed at a bilateral level with the relevant chairs. On that basis, a first draft of a position paper could be ready in Autumn 2014. **Claas Ulrich (vice-chair of the sub-group)** added that the group should furthermore develop consensus guidelines on the management of work-related skin cancer.

The chair thanked all speakers for their presentations and asked the Action members to provide the necessary data to the sub group and to the WGs since this will help to develop the position paper.

At the **closing** of the meeting he thanked all their attendance and reminded that the next StanDerm workshop where all working groups will have an opportunity to meet separately will take place from 6 to 7 October 2014 in Amsterdam.