

Respiratory Symptoms and Pulmonary Function Test among Salon Employees

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Objective: To evaluate the association between chemical exposure in salons and respiratory symptom development and evaluate pulmonary function tests (PFTs).

Design: A Cross-Sectional Prospective Study.

Setting: King Abdulaziz University Hospital, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Method: One hundred sixty employees from 35 randomly selected salons in Jeddah from July 2017 to September 2017 were included in the study. The study consisted of two parts answering a self-administrated questionnaire and measuring PFTs.

Result: One hundred sixty salon employees were included in the study, 91 (57%) reported different respiratory symptoms. Forty-four employees (28%) reported at least one respiratory symptom. However, cough, sputum, wheezing and shortness of breath were reported by only eight (5%) employees. Shortness of breath was the most common symptom reported by 71 (44%) followed by wheezing in 40 (25%). Four main risk factors were identified: (1) having a history of respiratory disease (odds ratio [OR] 6.51); (2) working with make-up (OR 4.3); (3) smoking (OR 3.61); (4) exposure to chemicals at work (OR 2.17).

Conclusion: More than half of salon employees reported respiratory symptoms in workplace. However, no significant impairment in PFTs was found. Improving the working environment and using protective devices will minimize exposure-related respiratory symptoms. Worker safety agencies and policymakers must ensure the suitability of the work environment and enforce the use of protective devices for all employees.