

Occupational Health Hazards in Anaesthesia

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Abstract

Introduction: Anaesthesia and Critical Care is a branch of medical science with workspace areas including Operation Theatres and Intensive care units. Both the places expose the doctors as well as the technicians to various physical, chemical, biological and ergonomical health hazards.

Objective: To create awareness about the various occupational health hazards in Anaesthesia.

Methodology: Pubmed and Google Scholar were explored for the literature articles using terms relevant for the study. Out of a total of 117 articles, 68 were found to be relevant. Inclusion criteria were: studies published in English, conducted in the last 10 years (2013-2023) and freely available. A total of 14 studies were used for this study.

Result: Physical stress includes lightings of the theatre, noise, temperature, radiations whereas chemical factors include exposure to latex and inhalational gases which are known to be a risk factor for certain diseases. These are also known to cause teratogenic effects on the foetus if a pregnant female is exposed for a long period of time. Surgeons, anaesthetists and technical and nursing staff are all under risk of infections due to blood spillages and cross contamination and improper waste management. Moreover, Intensive care units add on to the risk of getting severe infections from patients in the ICU with low immunity and acting as a reservoir of rare and severe infections. Both the Operation theatres as well as the ICU conditions requires the anaesthetist and intensivist to be on toes for any emergency whatsoever and thus pose a risk for diseases like varicose veins, chronic occupational stress.

Conclusion: Anaesthetist and Technical staff along with surgeons and nursing staff are exposed to a wide variety of health hazards. With the development of newer innovations and precautionary measures the risk can be reduced extensively.