

Occupational Cancer Today

OCCUPATION AND CANCER IN ONTARIO

FACT SHEET

CANCER CAN BE RELATED TO PAST WORKPLACE EXPOSURES

- Potentially large numbers, potentially preventable
- Workplace carcinogens can end up in the environment

THE BURDEN OF WORKPLACE CANCER IN ONTARIO IS UNKNOWN

- An estimated 4-10% of cancer deaths in developed countries may be related to workplace exposures
- If this were true in Ontario, a total of 1000-2600 deaths would be occupationally related each year (4-10% of the 26,000 cancer deaths in Ontario annually)
- The burden is uneven – 20-30% of cancers in blue collar workers may be due to workplace exposure

600,000 ONTARIANS MAY BE EXPOSED TO CARCINOGENS OTHER THAN SOLAR RADIATION AT WORK

- Many substances encountered mainly in the workplace have been identified as carcinogens: 28 definite, 27 probable, 113 possible carcinogens (IARC)
- 18 occupations/industries entail unspecifiable carcinogenic exposures
- Many other workplace substances are not evaluated
- Mesothelioma, a sentinel cancer for workplace asbestos exposure, continues to increase, reflecting exposure from 20 or more years ago (rather than current exposure)

THERE ARE STILL MANY UNKNOWNNS

- What carcinogens are found in which types of Ontario workplaces?
- What is the risk of cancer associated with *today's* exposures? How are workplace exposures evolving?
- To what are workers exposed, for how long, and at what concentrations?
- What is the burden of workplace cancer in Ontario?
- What can be done to prevent exposure to carcinogens?