

# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SANITARY WORKERS



# HAZARDS OF MUNICIPAL WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

Dr. P. Mary moses , Dr. G. Krishna babu , Dr.KVS.Prasad

**Introduction:** Municipal waste is an outcome of economic productivity and consumption and includes wastes from households, commercial establishments, institutions, markets, and industries and its handling and disposal is a growing environmental and public-health concern. Sanitary workers on contract are at risk for health hazards these hazards are neither documented nor addressed and hence an attempt is made to identify the occupational health hazards. **Aim:** The present study aimed to assess the occupational health problems of municipal scavengers. **Materials & methods:** Cross-sectional study was conducted among municipal workers of Kakinada, East Godavari District. Municipal corporation of Kakinada consists of total 14 divisions and 877 sanitary workers. All workers (209) of four randomly selected divisions were included in the study of which 196 (93.7%) have participated. Data was collected by direct interview and clinical examination using a structured questionnaire. The point prevalence of other occupational related health events present either during the study time or during 3 month recall period was collected by self-reported complaints and doctors diagnoses. The observed morbidity like respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, dermatological problems and nail infections were elicited by clinical examination. Analysis was done using Excel.

**Results:** The mean age of participants was  $36.5 \pm 9.3$  years. Most of them were Hindus, 68.4% belong to schedule caste community. Permanent workers constituted 64.8%. 87.8% were full time workers. Average working hours were  $9.8 \pm 2.4$  hrs per day. Most (85.6%) of the workers were using only coloured sleeveless jacket & only 8.7% were using gloves. Hand washing practice with soap was there in 35.2% of workers. The reported prevalence of occupation related morbidities like injury with sharps (55.2%), water borne diseases (16.3%), falls while dumping of waste (10.7%), animal bites (12.2%) and accidents (8.9%) were high. The observed morbidities like respiratory diseases, dermatological problems, nail infections & musculoskeletal morbidities were high ranging from 17.6% to 44.4%. Only 25.5% of the workers try Seek prompt medical advice for any medical problem. work absenteeism was mainly due to ill health 60.2%.

**Conclusions:** Occupation related illness is high and requires prompt treatment. Treatment seeking behaviours need to be encouraged. Municipal corporation should make provision for such checkups in their urban health centres and health insurance schemes needs to be encouraged for the sanitary workers.

**Key words:** Hygiene, Health hazard, treatment seeking behaviour.

