Proceedings International
Platinum Open Access Journal (ISSN 2668-6384)

Proceedings, Abstract
Volume 5, Issue 1, 2023, 20
https://doi.org/10.33263/Proceedings51.020

Occupational Cancer in Romania: Is it Really such a Rare Disease not to be Highlighted on the Public Agenda? †

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† Presented at 2nd Edition of the OncoHub Conference – Connecting Scientists and Physicians for Next Generation Cancer Management, Poiana Brașov, Brașov, 21-23 September 2022

Received: 10.12.2022; Accepted: 20.12.2022; Published: 5.01.2023

Abstract: The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that every year, 666,000 deaths are caused by occupational cancer globally. In the European Union (EU28), the estimation is that 102,500 deaths take place each year from occupational cancer [1]. For lung cancer, a previous exposure to occupational carcinogens, such as asbestos, diesel exhaust, silica, wood dust, and welding fumes, is present in 18-25% of men and 2-6% of women [2]. This presentation aims to show the current situation of occupational cancer in Romania and highlight the gaps in the collaboration between occupational physicians and other specialists working in oncology for a better prevention anddiagnosis of occupational cancer. A search of literature and representative international organizations (ILO, World Health organization, EU- Occupational Safety at Work) statements or guidelines regarding occupational cancer and programs developed to prevent and manage persons exposed to carcinogens in their working environment was conducted. Data from the current national statistics and legislation were also consulted. Romania had implemented the EU-Directive referring to carcinogens, but no direct actions (e.g., measurements of the level of carcinogens in the workplace), as required by the law, took place afterward. The guideline for occupational cancer surveillance is missing. For several occupational carcinogens, some mandatory screening tests are performed under the occupational surveillance (HG 355/2007) act in place, which needs many updates in general, not only for carcinogen exposures. The general international recommendation to have a national registry that would also include occupational exposure is also missing. There have been 0 cases of occupational cancers in the last 7 years. The recognition of cancer as occupational is limited to the group I carcinogens, as classified by the International Agency for the Study of Cancer. The national cancer plan and the public research agenda on cancer should include occupational cancer. Specific tools to collect data will help to decide the high-risk occupational populations to whom specific screening programs should be proposed and the necessary primary prevention areas to focus on in the near future.

Keywords: carcinogens; occupation; prevention; screening.

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Funding

This research received no external funding.

Acknowledgments

This research has no acknowledgment.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.