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Short Communication

Occupational Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (ONIHL) and Fishing

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Abstract

Fishing is a working environment, which, due to the presence of engines and noisy equipment, can lead to hearing problems, especially for workers who are more exposed, such as motorists. It is emphasized that prevention, the only weapon available, is more difficult at sea.

Keywords: Occupational noise-induced hearing loss; Epidemiology; Noise; Audiometry

Introduction

Occupational noise-induced hearing loss (ONIHL) describes an acquired hearing impairment attributable to excessive workplace noise exposure. ONIHL is likely to contribute to a very high proportion of the cases of hearing loss in adults. In Italy noise deafness affects almost two thirds of fishermen. The motorists and the Commanders present a greater risk of developing noise-induced hearing loss compared to sailors. These data agree with those reported in studies conducted in other countries. The main source of noise inside of the boats is represented by the engines that produce high sound levels too in fishing vessels of less than 30 m in length. A further aspect related to noise on fishing vessels is represented by exposure sometimes continuous; it is estimated that a 24-hour exposure at 85dB (A) matches at an exposure of 8 hours to 90dB (A). The high and constant exposure to noise, even during the few hours of rest on board, helps to develop not only the hearing loss but also sleep disorders and alterations of blood pressure and favors the occurrence of injuries. On the boat, the exposure time cannot be reduced, but the researchers recommend that measures are taken to decrease the intensity of the noise. Besides, they ask to the workers to receive a training and oration on the hearing health and on the raising awareness and sensitization to the noise exposure, to take regularly hearing tests and to be followed in the long term to warn the risks of the deafness further to the noise [1-5].

Conclusion

The relationship between fishing and deafness appears to be widespread among sea workers. It must to promote the culture of safety and health protection of workers in the maritime sector, in order to detect, analyze and study the risk factors in the fishing sector.

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