

# **Continuing Medical Education for Occupational Health Physicians : Needs and demands**

# Introduction

- Continuing medical education as a indispensable tool for maintaining and improving professional competencies
- The offer in CME in occupational medicine should correspond to the individual and collective needs and demands of the OH Physicians in practice
- CME should be organised according the principles of adult learning

# CME for occupational health physicians

1. Definition and position of CME
2. Determinants of the needs and demands for CME in Occupational Health Physicians
3. Exploring the existing needs and demands for CME
4. An enquiry of the needs and demands for CME in occupational health in Flanders
5. Conclusions

# 1. CME in Occupational Medicine: definition and position

- Continuing medical education or continuing professional development
- The balance between the actual professional capacities and the required professional competencies
- CME as the third phase in the training and educational process
- CME in Occupational Medicine as a growing market in the organised training business

# The balance between the available and required professional competencies

Personal characteristics

Acquired professional Capacities by training

General required professional competencies

- Law and regulations
- OHS organisation
- Clients demands
- social partners
- professional organisations

**Professional Capacities**



**Specific job Requirements**

**Personal professional development by practice**

**Tasks, demands and challenges in the specific work field**

## 2. Determinants of needs for CME in OH Physicians

### 1. Personal determinants

- Personality factors
- Quality of undergraduate training
- Quality of postgraduate specialisation
- Flexibility and opportunities in the daily work practice
- Availability of relevant CME offer
- Return on investment

# Determinants of needs for CME for O.H. Physicians

## 2. Organisational factors

- Changes in the global organisation of labour
- Developments in legislation and regulation
- New developments in work related health hazards
- Changes in the clients expectations
- Changes in the OHS organisation
- Quality assessment and audit
- Changes in the regulations about training and accreditation of occupational health professionals

# Exploring the needs and demands for CME

1. Indicators for personal capacity- job demands imbalance:
  - Uncertainty and doubts about knowledge and ways of handling problems
  - Experienced limitations in problem solving capacity
  - Inadequacy in advising to clients employers and employees
  - Communication difficulties with colleagues and/or other occupational health and safety specialists within the enterprise and within the OHS
  - Feeling stuck in daily routine activities
  - Lack of involvement in professional organisations



# Exploring the needs and demands for CME

## 2. Indicators on the collective level

- The existence of legal regulations about continuing professional development
- The existence of sufficient facilities for CME activities and participation of the personnel
- Assessment of personal training qualifications of OH professionals in the framework of an accreditation procedure or a quality audit
- The existence of an active program of personnel training within a human resources policy

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

## Aim:

- to assess the needs for CME in occupational medicine in a group of 59 Flemish Occupational Health physicians during a scientific meeting of the Flemish Scientific Association for Occupational health

## Method :

- a questionnaire was used to collect information about the personal priorities in the needs and demands for CME in occupational health. 59 of the 78 (76%) practising OH Physicians present returned the questionnaire. Among the respondents there were (1/3) male and (2/3) female OH Physicians, the latter also being significantly younger. 75% was working in an ESPP (External service for Prevention and Protection) and 25% in an ISPP (Internal Service for Prevention and Protection)

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

## Results:

### 1. Motives for asking CME (mean scores):

1. Experience in own OH practice	1.52
2. Demands from own SPP (OHS)	3.06
3. Demands from employer (client)	3.06
4. Demands from employees (client)	2.88
5. Influence from colleagues OH Physicians	3.66
6. Influences from other OH professionals	3.79

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

## 2. Priorities in updating of knowledge in relevant fields (mean scores)

1.	Occupational diseases, work related pathology	2.26
2.	Developments in clinical medicine	2.64
3.	Law	2.80
4.	Ethics	3.06
5.	Chemical risks and toxicology	1.76
6.	Physical risks	2.82
7.	Biological risks	2.59
8.	Physical work and work physiology	3.15
9.	Psychosocial risks	2.88
10.	Industrial hygiene	3.06
11.	Organisation of labour and enterprises	3.17

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders

(2004)

## 3. Priorities in updating professionals skills (mean scores)

1.	Medical examination for health surveillance	2.31
2.	Lung function examination	2.35
3.	Cardiovascular function examination	2.61
4.	Musculo-skeletal function examination	2.33
5.	Neurological function examination	2.66
6.	Vaccination	3.18
7.	Work place risk assessment	2.65
8.	Research	2.81
9.	Management of own activities	2.59
10.	Giving advice an negotiating solutions with clients	2.59
11.	Information and communication to clients	2.97
12.	Health promotion	2.80
13.	Quality assessment and quality care	2.90
14.	Medical data and ICT applications	2.92

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

## Preferences in type of CME activities (mean scores)

1.	Post-university seminars	2.10
2.	Attending scientific meeting (conference, symposium)	1.80
3.	Advanced training courses	2.40
4.	Using internet and other ICT information sources	3.11
5.	Active participation in scientific meeting (presentation)	3.88
6.	Doing active research including publication	3.69

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

- Preferences for time to spend for CME (Hours/year)

<10 hrs/year	0
11-30 hrs/year	20 (35%)
31-50 hrs/year	26 (46%)
>50hrs/year	10 (18%)

# The needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine in Flanders (2004)

## Conclusions of the study

- In the study sample there was a majority of female OH Physicians, especially in the younger age groups. This sample is not representative for all Flemish or Belgian OH Physicians
- The most prevalent motive for CME lies in the own practice
- Updating of knowledge in chemical agents and toxicology is considered the first priority, followed by work related pathology and occupational diseases, developments in clinical medicine
- Skills training is mostly asked for the core medical tasks (medical examination and health surveillance, relevant function tests)
- There is a preference for short, one day scientific meetings and for (half day) seminars
- The preferred time to spend for CME is in line with the EU recommendations of 50 hrs/year



# General conclusions on needs and demands for CME in occupational medicine

1. CME is a task and a challenge for all OH Physicians to maintain and improve their professional competencies
2. Continuing professional development forms a continuum with the basic and specialist training as an OH Physicians, which should provide sufficiently self-learning capacities
3. Needs and demands for CME rely both on individual perceptions of OH Physicians and collective strategies
4. Educational methods should be adapted to the professional practice and to the individual learning preferences
5. CME must have enough resources, both material and immaterial and supported by positive incentives
6. Providers and consumers of CME in occupational medicine should actively communicate and collaborate in the organisation and the quality assessment of CME programs