Occupational safety and health practices among flower greenhouses workers from Alto Tiete region (Brazil)

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In this preliminary study the occupational safety and health practices among flower greenhouses workers were evaluated. The study was carried out in the Alto Tietê region, located at the Sao Paulo state, Brazil. Inadequate welfare facilities; poor pesticide storage, use and disposal conditions; use of highly toxic pesticides; lack of adequate data regarding pesticide use; and incorrect use and maintenance of PPE were observed in most of the visited greenhouses. These results suggest that, in greenhouses, workers may be at higher risk of pesticide exposure, due to many factors that can intensify the exposure, such as the enclosed environment and the lack of control on reentry intervals after pesticide application. In order to deal with the peculiarities of this working environment, specific and clear rules are needed to ensure better OSH practices on pesticide use and consequently to improve working conditions in greenhouses. Some of the special requirements for greenhouses workers' protection include the establishment of ventilation criteria for restricted entry interval; clear reentry restrictions; and EPI for workers other than applicators that need to enter the greenhouse before expiring REI interval. Another important way to improve OSH practices among workers includes, for instance, the development and distribution of simple guidelines on the do's and don'ts regarding OSH practices in greenhouses concomitantly with extensive training interventions for both employers and workers to change the perception of hazards and the behavior towards risk.

Biography

Marcela Gerardo Ribeiro holds a PhD in chemistry from University of São Paulo (Brazil) and a post-graduate diploma in occupational health and safety in the workplace from ITC/ILO (joint to University of Turin). She is a researcher at Fundacentro, where also engages in teaching and overseeing research projects at the Institute’s Master Program. From 2006 to 2011 led a project under the WHO Global Network of Collaborating Centers in Occupational Health, publishing guidelines and training material based on the control banding approach. Areas of research/Interest: instrumental analysis of chemicals; qualitative approaches on chemical risk assessment; pesticide manipulation in flower greenhouses (good practices, risk perception, occupational exposure).

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