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Knowledge and practices about occupational health and safety among workers of beauty parlour in Kathmandu

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Introduction: The business of beauty parlour has played a major role in generating employment for the less educated but eager-to-learn individuals. In order to remain inspiring and successful, this growing business needs to meet and maintain high standards of safety, health and hygiene so that no risk is present to customers and workers. Problems such as poor posture, mechanical loads on the joints, prolonged standing, longer working hours, missed meals, not taking breaks during work, as well as being subjected to physical factors such as noise and higher temperatures are important occupational health hazards for workers in beauty parlour.

Findings: Most (68%) of the beauty parlour workers interviewed in the study belonged to 16 -25 year age group. The mean age of the sample population was 23 years. The youngest worker was 15 years old and the oldest one 58 years old. Majority (90%) of the beauty parlour workers were literate. Most (87%) of the beauty parlour workers had received professional training. About one third of the informants (34%) reported that they did not receive any information regarding OHS. Majority (73%) of the beauty parlour workers thought that the beauty parlour owner was responsible to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) in the beauty parlour. All most all (95%) of the informants reported that the owner of the parlour did not provide any pre-employment medical examination. Vast majority (93.3%) of the informants reported that the owner of the parlour did not provide any periodical medical examination. Majority (70%) of the parlour workers have the good knowledge about skin diseases such as allergies, irritants, skin cancer, infection and such diseases. One third (33%) of parlour workers did not have any knowledge about occupational diseases. Majority (67%) of the salon worker were knowledgeable about Hepatitis B and C. Majority (69%) workers were knowledgeable about musculoskeletal disorders such as joint pain, repetitive strain injury. Vast majority (85%) of the parlour workers reported that they have the knowledge about the role of contaminated blades, clippers, towels, aprons and combs in causing skin diseases and problems. Although all the informants reported that they washed their hands before each new client, but the researchers observed in some cases, the informants did not wash their hands before each new client. In this study, majority (67%) of the beauty parlour workers did not use surgical gloves during the wet work. Vast majority (87%) of the parlour workers reported that they reused towels on new clients. Two thirds (66%) of the workers reported that they took break during work.

Conclusion: The level of OHS awareness, knowledge of risk and risk prevention practices among parlour workers associated with their profession is satisfactory. The study revealed that there were no pre-employment and periodical medical examination facilities salon workers. Most of the parlour workers notified hazards in salon and assigned to take part in OHS education program to their workers. The knowledge of the parlour workers about the risk related to salon was also pleasing. Majority of the parlour workers were knowledgeable about skin diseases. The study also revealed that the vast majority of the salon workers were knowledgeable about the role of contaminated blades, clippers, towels, aprons and combs in causing skin disease and knowledge about the razor/blades as the potential sources of contamination.

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