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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

The term developing countries often implies a group of countries with an identical set of problems and solutions, this is indeed a misconception. In reality, the developing world comprises countries of great diversity in terms of economic and industrial development, political ideologies and systems; administrative and work ethics; besides cultural and geographical differences. In this context, it would be evident that there exists no common solution to the occupational health problems of the developing countries. But, what may be identified are some of the common policy issues in occupational health which are relevant to these countries. However the style and pace of implementation of these policies would be according to the characteristics of the individual nations.

The title of this paper implies that occupational health problems in the developing countries are different from those of the industrialized nations. This not necessary always the case. The health concerns of man in his working environment are to a large extent universal, with much in common to both the industrialized nations and the developing countries. However, there are differences and this paper addresses the following three issues in occupational health which require the attention of the nations and the developing world.

- (i) Identification of priority needs in occupational health.
- (ii) Legislation for the delivery of occupational health care services.
- (iii) Transfer of industrial process and hazardous waste to developing countries.

These needs are largely related to the organization of occupational health services in the countries of the developing world. As, the main problem for occupational health in the developing world is not the need for new technology and skills but rather policy decisions which could make available existing knowledge and skills to those in need - the working population.