

ABSTRACT

Title: Research on Occupational Cancer Profile in Malaysia

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Abstract:

While the burden of occupational cancers can be reduced through early prevention and control measures, gaps in awareness on occupational cancers and the requirements to notify such cases among medical practitioners remain. The objective of this study is to determine the awareness and issues faced during notification of occupational cancer among medical practitioners in Malaysia. An invitation email containing a link or QR code to the study questionnaire was blasted to all medical practitioners through the email list of multiple organisations. Eligible participants were Malaysian medical practitioners with at least 5 years of experience, while those who were non-Malaysians were excluded. Socio-demographic variables were compared using chi-square test, Fisher's exact test and invariable logistic regression. Multivariate analysis was conducted using logistic regression. A total of 168 medical practitioners participated in the study, of which majority were registered occupational health doctors (70%), and practiced in urban areas (71%). Overall, 50 participants reported encountering patients with cancer or suspected cancer during their routine practice in the 12 months preceding the study, in which only 8 cases were deemed as occupational in nature and notified to Department of Occupational Safety and Health. Common issues with notification included lack of understanding on the notification system (13%), completing the online form (11%) and lack of knowledge on filling up the online forms (11%). Those who received adequate basic/pre-qualification training on occupational cancer and reported having sufficient knowledge on occupational hazards or occupational cancers were more likely to have better knowledge on identifying occupational cancers. Knowledge on occupational cancer remains a challenge among doctors, and this may impact disease notification to authorities. Provision of basic training on occupational cancers should be prioritized to reduce the burden of occupational cancers in the country.

Keywords: occupational cancer, notification, awareness