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SCIENTIFIC SESSION III
Ramazzini in the time of Covid III

1. 24th and 25th Collegium Ramazzini Statement - Prevention of work-related infection in the COVID-19 pandemid: need for a global response *Daniele Mandrioli, Italy*

2. NIEHS WTP Covid-19 Worker Protection Initiative *Joseph T. Hughes, Jr., USA*

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24th and 25th Collegium Ramazzini Statement - Prevention of work-related infection in the COVID-19 pandemid: need for a global response

*Daniele Mandrioli**

[1]Collegium Ramazzini, Carpi, Modena, Italy

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every country in the world, caused confirmed illness in nearly 30 million people, unconfirmed disease in millions more, and nearly 1 million deaths. At present, there is no vaccine and no medical treatment for COVID-19. Pandemic control must therefore rely entirely on measures that reduce the spread of infection, flatten the epidemic curve, and gain time to develop more effective responses. Workers whose occupations put them in contact with infected persons and the public are at greatly increased risk of disease and death and have suffered disproportionately in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods/Approach: The Collegium Ramazzini proposed principles and best practices to protect workers and workplaces from COVID-19 infection in its 24th and 25th Statement.

Results: Workers are at greatly increased risk of COVID-19 infection and require heightened protection. A partial listing of high-risk workers is the following: health care workers, police, firefighters, transport workers, hotel and food service workers; cruise industry workers; older workers, workers with underlying medical conditions, such as hypertension, obesity, heart disease and cancer; workers occupationally exposed to dusts, gases and fumes; workers of low socio-economic status; workers exposed to high levels of ambient air pollution; and workers in low and middle income countries.

Conclusions: The Collegium Ramazzini calls on governments at all levels and on all employers to fulfill their responsibilities to protect the health of all workers in the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that in many low-income and middle-income countries implementation of these practices has proven challenging, the Collegium Ramazzini now calls attention to the urgent need for a much expanded global public health infrastructure to prevent and contain COVID-19 infection among workers in all countries of the world, acknowledging and reacting to the worldwide shortages of essential supplies, including proper medical supplies, medical screening equipment and laboratories, and personal protective equipment.

*** Presenting author profile:**

Mandrioli Daniele

Daniele Mandrioli, MD is the Director of the Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center of the Ramazzini Institute, Bologna, Italy. He conducts research on environmental toxicants and carcinogens and Evidence Based Toxicology (EBT). Dr. Mandrioli's research on environmental toxicants and carcinogens includes the design and development of bioassays, investigations on the role of aneuploidy in carcinogenesis and reproductive toxicity, and the analysis of different chemical regulations and their implications for public health.

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NIEHS WTP Covid-19 Worker Protection Initiative

Joseph T. Hughes, Jr.
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Background: With new supplemental funding from Congress for coronavirus response in March 2020, NIEHS Worker Training Program (WTP) created a COVID19 virtual safety training initiative for 'frontline emergency responders and cleanup personnel'. These target populations included critical workers to support key infrastructure functions such as emergency medical personnel, firefighters, water and sewage treatment, sanitation workers and health care facility employees. This is initial focus of the NIEHS WTP grantees was successful because the awardees are well connected to COVID-impacted high risk populations and have pre- existing trust relationships, a long track record of collaboration and established training agreements.

Methods/Approach: Using our hazmat trainers' understanding of worker safety and health protection issues, knowledge of personal protective equipment (PPE) usage, and experience in training disaster workers, WTP provided awardees with material to develop an evidence-based curriculum that addresses the science of Coronavirus (clinical symptoms, mode of transmission, persistence in the environment, and treatment); infection control and worker protection (isolation/quarantine and PPE); working in the contaminated environment (sampling and decontamination); and behavioral health resiliency.

Results: During the initial phase of the pandemic response, numerous categories of workers benefited from this virtual platform, including workers in the food preparation and delivery sector, public transportation sectors, and utility operation and waste management/collection sectors. Creating trust between local community organizations that serve essential and returning workers and the components of the public health and medical care infrastructure are critical for reducing community spread and recovering from the pandemic.

Conclusion: The Coronavirus pandemic has had a dramatic effect on every workplace in the United States, but it has been most severe among urban communities of color, tribal nations, meatpacking facilities in rural isolated locations and with agricultural workers. Because of underlying health disparities, many workers have contracted COVID-19 at work as employers have avoided taking responsibility.

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Mr. Hughes is currently director of an innovative federal safety and health training program based at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The program supports cooperative agreements to develop and deliver model safety and health training programs for workers involved in hazardous substances response with numerous universities, unions, community colleges and other non-profit organizations throughout the nation.

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