

Occupational Asthma of an Office Worker

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Abstract

Diagnosis of occupational asthma is always a challenge, particularly in a white collar setting, as it is a widespread belief that occupational respiratory diseases, including asthma, are associated only with industrial exposure. A detailed occupational history, a comprehensive workplace assessment and a proof of the relation between asthma attack and the presence of a risk factor in the workplace environment are the key factors for diagnosis. Early diagnosis of occupational asthma has a major positive influence on improving both evolution and prognosis. However, due to the reluctance of the patients to discuss health issues with co-workers, managers, occupational and family doctors, and to the difficulties in demonstrating that an occupational risk factor is the trigger of the asthma attack, the diagnosis is often delayed. We are reporting for the first time in Romania an occupational asthma in a bank desk officer that has been diagnosed after several years of work related symptoms by using the peakflowmetry measurement, a recently accepted demonstration of the occupational etiology of asthma. The peakflowmetry monitoring result, the workplace analysis and the presence of respiratory symptoms of the co-workers were fully conclusive in supporting the diagnosis of occupational asthma.

Key words: occupational asthma, office worker, peakflowmetry