

The National Board of Industrial injuries

Bent Mathiesen, MD

Chief Medical Consultant

Former head of the medical unit

Specialist of orthopaedic surgery



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When is a disease
an occupational disease?



What is an occupational disease?

Occupational diseases are diseases that are brought about by

- specific influence to which
- certain groups of people
- through their work or working conditions
- are more exposed than persons not having such work

List of Occupational Diseases

Only diseases that are included on the List of Occupational Diseases are occupational diseases

The List includes a number of disorders and complaints which can be recognised or turned down by administrative means, depending on the fulfilment of a number of general and special conditions

The List is in principle exhaustive

In Denmark there is the possibility, however, that diseases not on the List will qualify for recognition after submission to a special Occupational Diseases Committee

Sir Austin Bradford Hill's 9 criteria for causality between diseases and occupation

- **The strength of the association**
- **Consistency**
- **Specificity**
- **Temporality**
- **Biological gradient (dose-response)**

- **Biological plausibility**
- **Coherence**
- **Experimental evidence**
- **Analogy**

Hill A.B. The environment and disease. Association or causation?
Proc. R. Soc. Med. 1965 : 58: 295-300



Medical documentation

- 1) A biologically natural and logical explanation to the disease



Medical documentation

- 2) An exposure that must be of a nature and an extent that make the disease likely

Medical documentation

- 3) A correlation between exposure and disease,
i.e. that increased exposure causes an increase in the severity of the disease
(dose-response)

Medical documentation

- 4) Surveys of prevalence in the population that confirm a correlation



Medical documentation

- 5) Convincing reporting of cases found in medical examinations

Medical documentation

- 6) A significant over-frequency of the disease in persons who suffer this exposure in relation to persons who do not

New List of Occupational Diseases

The List of Occupational Diseases includes only diseases and exposures

The conditions for recognition are listed in a new guide

This means that the conditions are guiding and that it is possible,
according to an estimate, to depart from them



New List of Occupational Diseases

For the purpose of documentation and description of this correlation we have written a guide including –

- The requirements for recognition
- Requirements as to how a diagnosis should be made
- A detailed description of the exposures
- Pre-existing and competitive diseases
- A list of each of the 6 checkpoints for medical documentation
- 10 very detailed examples of cases that will be recognised or turned down

New List of Occupational Diseases

These diseases have been negotiated and accepted for the List :

- Noise-related hearing loss
- Chronic low-back diseases
- Degenerative arthritis of both hip joints
- Degenerative arthritis of the knee joints
- Bursitis of the knee (unchanged requirements)
- Meniscus diseases (unchanged requirements)
- Pleural plaques



New List of Occupational Diseases

These diseases have been negotiated and accepted for the List :

- Tendovaginitis, tendinitis and peritendinitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Epicondylitis medialis humeri (golfer's elbow)
- Epicondylitis lateralis humeri (tennis elbow)
- Rotator cuff syndrome and tendinitis of the biceps tendon (caput longum musculus biceps brachii)
- Chronic neck and shoulder pain

New List of Occupational Diseases

These diseases have been negotiated and accepted for the List :

- A number of cancer diseases (28 changes on new list – i.a. lung cancer after passive smoking and breast cancer after ionising radiation)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)



New List of Occupational Diseases

These diseases have been negotiated and have not been accepted for the List, but it has been agreed to submit claims to the Committee in the event of severe exposure

- Cardiovascular diseases caused by stress
- Mental disorders caused by stress
- Mental disorders after bullying and harassment
- Breast cancer as a consequence of shift work / night work
- Diseases of the shoulder, arm and hand caused by work with a computer mouse
- Diseases / complaints caused by work with mercury in dental care

New List of Occupational Diseases

The introduction of the new occupational diseases concept has been a success because:

- It is much easier to understand
- It combines medicine and law
- From an administrative point of view it is better and easier to handle
- It includes a thorough and workable guide
- From a medical point of view it is better and easier to handle
- It is medically updated with the most recent knowledge
- It has led to the recognition of many more claims



New List of Occupational Diseases

Quite concretely the introduction of the concept of medical documentation has had the effect that many more claims can now be recognised on the basis of the list

This applies in particular to

- Overuse injuries to arms and legs
- Some mental disorders (post-traumatic stress disorder)
- Cancer diseases

New List of Occupational Diseases

Furthermore there now is a better medical basis for assessing and perhaps recognising

Mental diseases caused by particularly severe exposure to –

- Stress
- Bullying and harassment

after the claims have been submitted to the Occupational Diseases Committee



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**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

