

# Managing an occupational skin problem

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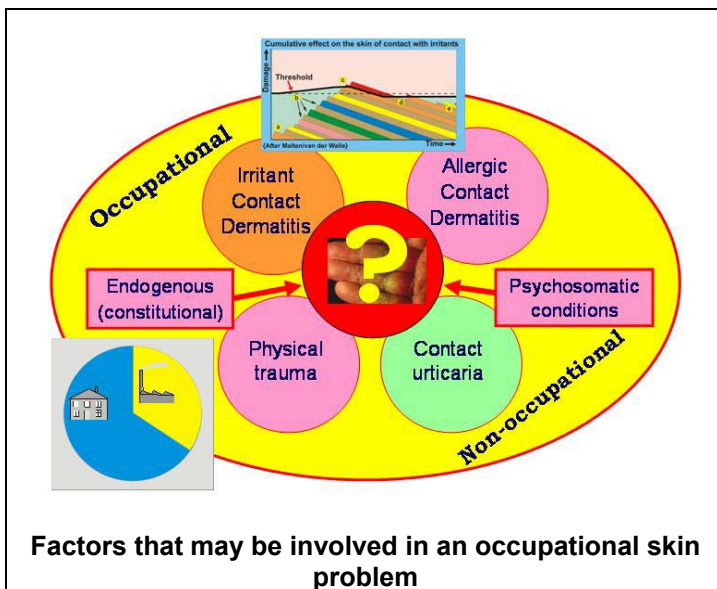
## *What do I do if a skin problem occurs at work?*

A half-day course to help those who need to deal with a skin problem that may be occupational in origin.

However carefully we structure our skin management system we can never entirely eliminate the possibility that someone will develop a skin problem during their employment.

What is then important is that we:

- ✓ Correctly identify the cause
- ✓ Take action to prevent others becoming similarly affected
- ✓ Ensure, if possible, that we obtain the correct treatment
- ✓ Modify workplace conditions, if appropriate, to keep that person at work without an on-going skin problem



As the diagramme shows, there are many factors that can be involved in a skin problem, some of them not occupational.

Whilst not all will apply in every case, unless our investigation identifies these there is a risk of incorrect diagnosis and treatment which can actually make the problem worse.

Participation in this course will give you the knowledge to deal with a skin problem where it is suspected that this could be occupational in origin. Topics covered will include:

### **Investigating an occupational skin problem**

Questionnaire, workplace visit, identifying hazards, liaison with medical specialists, e.g. dermatologist, interpreting the clinical diagnosis, evaluating the relevance of different factors in deciding the occupational elements of the skin problem

### **Managing the skin problem**

Evaluating what can be done, identifying and controlling skin exposure, selection and use of personal protective equipment, the role of skin care products, medical treatment, skin condition monitoring

Both parts of the course will be highly practical, with case studies illustrating particularly interesting problems. Participants will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions or seek views on individual situations.

This course is generally held immediately after the half-day course on skin health surveillance, so participation in both is recommended.

## **Course content**

### **Occupational skin problems – causes and consequences**

What are the different types of skin problem that might be caused by workplace conditions – multifactorial causes – the 24:8 rule

### **A structured approach to investigating a suspected case of occupational skin disease**

Unless a suspected case of occupational skin disease is correctly investigated it is easy to reach conclusions that may result in an incorrect diagnosis, inappropriate treatment and considerable cost to the employer. A structured system will be explained that will help to avoid these potential errors.

### **What are we handling**

In order to investigate a possible occupational skin problem we need to know what chemicals are really present in the workplace. This information cannot usually be obtained from the safety data sheet. The course will explain why and what you need to do to ensure that you have the correct information.

### **The workplace visit – what to look for**

Occupational skin problems are caused by conditions at work. Thus it is essential for the investigation to include the working environment of the person concerned. In this section we will explain how to approach a workplace visit, what to look for and how to interpret what you have seen.

### **Referral to the medical specialist (dermatologist)**

Unless the cause is absolutely clear (and you need to exercise caution here) it will be necessary to refer the case to a dermatologist, but one who is experienced in contact dermatitis cases. The dermatologist will need information so that he or she knows what to look for. In this section we will consider what information is needed and how this can affect the diagnosis.

### **Interpreting the diagnosis**

Once the diagnosis has been received it is necessary to review the case to ensure that this is relevant to the particular situation. Case studies will be presented to show why this is important and to illustrate how you need to interpret the diagnosis.

### **When do I report under RIDDOR?**

Occupational contact dermatitis is reportable under RIDDOR, but only under certain conditions. The point at which a report needs to be made will be explained.

### **What can be done to help the individual**

Our ultimate aim must be to keep the person or persons who have experienced the skin problem at work with no recurrence of the problem. This section will describe some of the ways in which this can be done and when other action is needed.

### **Timing, cost etc.**

Registration starts at 13:30 and the actual course starts at 14:00. The course finishes around 16:30. Full information on cost, venues, etc. can be found in the course booking form.



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