

Van Dijk F. *Who knows the risk? Challenge to improve education and knowledge infrastructure for workers and companies.* *Occup Environ Med.* 2015;72:544-5. No abstract. Copyright: the journal Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

In this article the author comments a study of Dragano and colleagues: *A multilevel study of systematic variations in work related safety knowledge in the European work force.*¹

Dragano et al found that being not very well informed about health and safety risks at work was associated with being younger, a low education, a lower occupational position, working in the private sector, being new at the work place, working with a temporary contract and in smaller companies. So, being informed about risks at work follows the *inverse care law*: the availability of good information varies inversely with the need of the working population. Inspection activities and health and safety programs are recommended by Dragano et al. They add that knowledge has to be presented in a format most adequate for the target population.

In the Commentary a Belgian study of Hambach et al is cited, a focus group study on workers' perception of chemical risks, that underlines the need to adapt education and information programs considering the target population.² These authors show the difference in risk perceptions between workers and experts, and recommend a participatory approach involving the workers in prevention programs as a key condition for effective solutions.

Such a strategy is in line with the community approach advocated by ILO in diverse programs such as the WIND program.³ Employers and OSH experts should spend more time to education and information on risks. Primary health care professionals when adequately educated and supported by experts, can have a crucial impact where OSH experts are not available what is daily practice for 85 % of the global working population.

Branch wise activities using online information facilities can be considered as an important other option to inform about risks and solutions. The common website of all academic medical hospitals in the Netherlands is given as an example: www.dokterhoe.nl.

A good example of a nation-wide OSH information facility is the Canadian website www.ccohs.ca. A similar online Question and Answer facility in the Netherlands has been evaluated as working effectively, providing considerably better answers for workers compared with searches in which workers use Google.^{4,5}

¹ Dragano N, Lunau T, Eikemo TA, Toch-Marquardt M, van der Wel KA, Bambra C. Who knows the risk? A multilevel study of systematic variations in work related safety knowledge in the European workforce. *Occup Environ Med.* 2015;72: 553-59.

² Hambach R, Mairiaux P, François G, Braeckman L, Balsat A, Van Hal G, et al. Workers' perception of chemical risks: a focus group study. *Risk Anal.* 2011;31:335-42.

³ Kawakami T, Van VN, Theu NV, Khai TT, Kogi K. Participatory support to farmers in improving safety and health at work: building WIND farmer volunteer networks in Viet Nam. *Ind Health.* 2008;46:455-62.

⁴ Rhebergen MD, Lenderink AF, van Dijk FJ, Hulshof CT. Comparing the use of an online expert health network against common information sources to answer health questions. *J Med Internet Res.* 2012;14:e9.

⁵ Rhebergen MD, Lenderink AF, van Dijk FJ, Hulshof CT. Can online networks provide quality answers to questions about occupational safety and health? *Occup Environ Med.* 2012;69:347-53.