



**COST Action TD1206 Early Stage Researchers' Forum on
"The challenge of occupational skin diseases: Basic translational and applied research"
29 July 2015, Munich, Germany**

ABSTRACT

Title: Skin Protection in the metalworking industry - A questionnaire survey -

Authors: Theres Heichel, Swen Malte John, Meike Strunk

Dept. of Dermatology, Environmental Medicine, Health Theory, University of Osnabrück, Germany

Objective: The objective of the study was to gain knowledge about skin-hazardous activities/materials and skin protection measures of employees in the metalworking industry. In addition, the consumer acceptance of a new skin care product was investigated.

Methods: In two-/three-week in-use-study we included 115 metalworkers, employed in 9 companies. A standardized questionnaire was used to provide information about the nature/extent of occupational exposure, skin symptoms, individual skin protection habits and the cosmetic properties of the barrier cream Protexsan® (Peter Greven Physiaderm, Germany) in comparison to the skin protection product used previously.

Results: 67.8% of all metalworkers reported wearing gloves. Among them, 40 stated that they regularly wore gloves for 4 hours or more over a working day. In comparison: 98.3% were identified to have dirty, 71.3% to have wet hands while working. 39.1% of all participants had suffered from skin problems of the hands at the last 12 months. Current skin symptoms were reported by 35.7% of the metalworkers. 77.4% reported the use of barrier creams at the workplace, 23.5% denied any use of occupational protective creams.

The protective and nourishing effect of the tested cream has been found to be good. In particular, the participants stated that the cream facilitates cleaning of the hands, reducing the amount of contamination. The absence of perfume in the cream led to a subjective disadvantage compared with previous products.

Conclusion: Skin protection measures are not sufficiently utilized in daily practice in the metalworking industry.