

Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) Report

STSM details

Title	Train the trainer education on protective gloves and occupational skin diseases and their prevention, applicable in different settings and for different target groups
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Host	iDerm - Institut für interdisziplinäre Dermatologische Prävention und Rehabilitation, Prof. Dr. med. Swen Malte John, Osnabrück, Germany
Period	13 – 17 April 2015
Reference	ECOST-STSM-TD1206-130415-058669

Introduction

I have got the opportunity to be the participant of the COST STSM at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Dermatological Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Osnabrück (iDerm), on education of patients with skin problems and proper use of gloves which I accepted with pleasure.

Over the past three years, the Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work has created, organized and performed educational seminars with workshops about protective gloves and skin protection for different target groups (e. g. occupational medicine specialists, occupational safety experts and workers) in Croatia. The title of our seminar is “Your hands are the most important tools”. Our seminar team consists of engineers and physicians from our institute. Our seminars mainly aim at raising awareness to use appropriate protective gloves for different working activities in order to prevent occupational skin diseases and injuries of the hands. At the workshop, participants are encouraged to ask questions and the workshop also serves as a platform to solve problems related to skin problems and the use of protective gloves.

My stay at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Dermatological Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Osnabrück (iDerm) was an excellent opportunity for gaining a deeper insight into specific issues of education and as well as a great tool directed towards joining efforts with experts from Osnabrück. This STSM will help to design a model educational seminar about protective gloves and prevention of occupational skin diseases for different target groups.

Objectives

The objectives of this STSM were to:

- Learn how to develop and improve educational seminars directed towards raising

- awareness of using protective gloves and prevention of skin problems
- Learn how to develop educational seminars in a more interactive manner
- Analyze the methodology of knowledge and information transfer (developed in Osnabrück) for education of workers having skin problems
- Learn techniques to assess the individual skin barrier function
- Strengthen the collaboration between the host and the guest institution

Description of the work carried out during the STSM

Introduction

My STSM lasted for five days. The program set up by the host institution gave me an overview of all important activities for in-patient and out-patient treatment run by iDerm. During these five days, I participated in skin protection seminars and individual counselling about the correct use of protective gloves as well as occupational therapy to test the recommended gloves. Furthermore, I was involved in discussions with the interdisciplinary team of health educationalists, dermatologists and nursing staff. Last but not least, I joined the ward rounds run by dermatologists at the clinic.

On the first day of the STSM, after a general introduction and visit to the clinic, I joined a welcome educational skin protection seminar. In-patient education is done in four major steps (part I, part II, part III and part IV) through which patients have to pass within the course of their three-week-stay in the clinic. On the last day of my visit, I attended a so-called “booster (refresher) seminar” which is aimed at helping patients already trained in skin protection measures to upgrade their skills.

During my stay I was actively involved on all levels in treatment and education for inpatients and outpatients. I learned that the interdisciplinary collaboration among dermatologists, health education specialist and nurses provides a real benefit for patients. It creates solutions which are easy and quick to apply and – most important - fit the individual needs of each patient and are based on latest research as well. This in turn promotes sustainable skin protection behavior in patients.

Skin protection seminars

Skin protection seminars and patients' education are performed by health education specialists especially trained in knowledge transfer / healthcare settings. Seminars focus on patients with skin diseases and problems. Patients are provided with educational material and receive training on:

- structure and function of the skin (skin model, brick model and educational film)
- different risks at the workplace and in free time causing skin problems
- appropriate protective gloves for their workplace
- appropriate protective gloves for their personal use at home and leisure time(e.g. cooking or gardening)
- disposal of single-use and re-usable protective gloves
- regular skin care before, during and after work using appropriate creams, cleansing agents, hand sanitizers
- adequate use of disinfectant agents

Individual counselling regarding protective gloves

This measure aims at choosing proper types of protective gloves to suit patient needs at work and at home. It is performed by iDerm's health education specialists in close collaboration with each patient. From a huge selection of protective gloves, each patient can try out various types of protective gloves. However, the best fitting and most appropriate for the individual needs of each patient is eventually chosen.

Description of the main results obtained

The main results of my STSM are:

- professional and personal development as a researcher and expert in occupational safety
- implementation of a more interactive way of seminar presentation
- implementation of additional equipment and demonstrations in our seminars (e.g. skin model, brick model of the skin, using pH tester for skin cleaning products, using water, sugar and cream to demonstrate the effects of skin protection)
- collection of experts' opinions on different types of protective gloves and usage for different working activities
- ideas for future joint research activities
- simplified evaluation check list and questionnaire for everyday use in occupational safety and health
- development and implementation of European Standards on prevention of occupational skin diseases

Future collaboration with the host institution

This STSM will be extremely useful for creating new activities in our institute such as individual counselling for personal protective equipment (mainly protective gloves) and occupational therapy to test the recommended gloves. The experience and knowledge which I collected during this STSM will be mainly put to use at the Croatian Institute for Health Protection and Safety at Work. It will help to improve education / training for safety experts and occupational physicians in Croatia in the field of prevention of occupational skin diseases and use of protective gloves. As the expert in occupational safety and engineer of textile technology, further collaboration with the experts of the host institution will be of interest in the field of personal protective equipment, especially UV-protective clothing. We anticipate a future exchange of experience and knowledge between our institutes.

Other comments

The iDerm prepared an interesting schedule for COST STSM and my host team was very friendly and performs excellent work. I really would like to thank Prof. Dr. med. Swen Malte John, Prof. Dr. med. Christoph Skudlik, Dr. med. Richard Brans and the physicians at the Department for Dermatology, the Health Education Department and its chair Dr. rer. medic. Annika Wilke for the programme which she organised for me, and Dr. rer. nat. Flora Sonsmann, Mrs. Anja Hübner, Mrs. Michaela Ludwig, Mrs. Julia Sauerzapfe, Mr. Andreas Hansen, Mr. Harald Buck. Last but not least, I would like to thank the organisational staff and members of the host institution for supporting this STSM as well as the COST Action StanDerm for making this exchange possible.

This was my first experience as an expert in occupational safety and as a researcher abroad and I am completely satisfied about it because I was given the opportunity to learn so much.

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April 30, 2015