



## EADV-Campaign "healthy skin @ work / europrevention"

### **What is the EADV ?**

Founded in 1987, EADV is a non-profit association whose mission is to advance excellence in clinical care, research, education and training in the field of dermatology and Venereology and to act as the advocate and educator of patients particularly those with cutaneous or venereal diseases. (For more info see [www.eadv.org](http://www.eadv.org))

### **Why a campaign ?**

In 2008, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work published the European Risk Observatory report: **Occupational skin diseases (OSD) and dermal exposure in the EU (EU-25)**. This showed that "skin diseases are the second most common work-related health problem in Europe". They may represent more than 25% of all occupational illnesses and "are one of the **most important emerging risks** related to the exposure to chemical, physical and biological risk factors". OSD account for 90 % of all work related health problems in the age group of 15-25.

It is estimated that within the European Union the costs of OSD-related medical treatment, sick leave and loss of productivity exceed 5 billion euros annually. Most of these costs fall on small and medium sized companies (SME). For individuals, the chronic course of OSD may result in detrimental socioeconomic and psychological consequences, including job loss and long-term unemployment. For SMEs there is increasing pressure, in this time of recession, to improve their competitiveness by reducing costs.

Established scientific data demonstrate the outstanding effectiveness of OSD prevention in some countries. Prevention can save workers' health and jobs, and thus significantly reduce costs for industry and society. The EADV "healthy skin @ work/europrevention" campaign aims to put science into practice by disseminating experience and making the recent achievements in dermatological prevention available to every EU-citizen.

### **What will be done – methods and strategies:**

Abundant data is now available from countries where preventive OSD initiatives in selected settings and occupations have proved successful. In this context, early dermatological intervention as well as specific teaching of affected individuals ("workers' education") have been demonstrated as pivotal. These measures need to be accompanied by EU-wide regulatory efforts to limit exposure to hazardous substances.

Awareness of OSD, its pathogenesis, and prevention still needs to be improved throughout the EU. The EU-25 report states: OSD "to a large extent, can be prevented by the combination of technical and organisational measures designed to eliminate or minimise exposures of the skin to risk factors" and "the precise, early diagnosis of an occupational skin disease is essential for the successful treatment and early return to work but also for controlling the risk at the workplace." In order to achieve this on a large scale, the EADV "europrevention" campaign is working to establish a common and co-ordinated approach to the prevention of OSD in all EU-states. It seeks to close, throughout Europe, the gap between yesterday's practice and today's scientific knowledge. It also aims to promote further research. Areas for research include: the



development of robust best-practice models for disseminating information and managing patients, which are compatible with the various EU-social insurance systems, with relevance to occupations, personal backgrounds, ethnicities and age groups of OSD sufferers; risk and susceptibility assessment; continuous health surveillance; development of common scientific standards for personal protective measures; teaching-curricula, including those for CME and vocational schools; the design and development of data bases and public internet information-platforms.

### **Duration of the campaign:**

The campaign seeks to raise public and political awareness to the problem of OSD and the greatly improved knowledge on the possibilities of their prevention. The benefits of scientific progress should be made available at all workplaces throughout Europe. The campaign will start in 2010, and last until this goal is accomplished. The opening dinner conference will take place on Nov. 18th, 2009 in the EU-Parliament, Brussels.

### **EPOS: network of experts:**

Recently, 51 leading experts from 21 European countries have founded the European Initiative for the Prevention of Occupational Skin Diseases [EPOS]. EPOS will give scientific guidance for the EADV campaign. The members are:

W Aberer Austria ; KE Andersen, T Agner Denmark ; K Alanko Finland ; KC Appl Germany; A Barbaud France; A Bauer Germany; A Beliauskiene Lithuania; AS Boman Sweden; M Bruze Sweden; D Chomiczewska Poland; PJ Coenraads Holland; L Constandt Belgium; TL Diepgen, H Drexler Germany; J Duus Johansen Denmark; P Elsner Germany; M Eisen Estonia; M Fartasch, K Fritz, PJ Frosch, J Geier Germany; AM Giménez-Arnau Spain; M Goncalves Portugal; A Goossens Belgium; SM John Germany ; F Jungbauer Holland; M Kiec-Swierczynska Poland; M Matura Sweden; T Menné Denmark; J Macan Croatia; JB Nielsen Denmark; F Larese Italy; C Lidén Sweden; S Kezic Holland; B Krecisz Poland; T Rustemeyer Holland; Sartorelli Italy; H Sosted Denmark; HP Rast Switzerland; N Tsankov Bulgaria; M Trakatelli Greece; A Schnuch, C Skudlik Germany; D Sotiriadis Greece; W Uter Germany ; N Veien Denmark; T Werfel Germany; J Williams, I White UK; B Wulfhorst Germany; R Zvejniece Latvia.

EPOS serves as an international network platform in the field of occupational dermatology, connecting experts, scientists and other interested individuals. It will enable cross fertilization of ideas, techniques and best practice ([www.epos2010.eu](http://www.epos2010.eu)).

### **Conclusions:**

Occupational skin diseases (OSD) are a leading cause of work related health problems in Europe, representing up to 25% of all occupational diseases in some countries. OSD account for 90 % of all work related health problems in the age group of 15-25. It is estimated that OSD cause financial losses exceeding the 5 billion euro per year in the European Union due to costs for medical treatment, sick leave and loss of productivity, particularly among small and medium sized companies. For individuals, the chronic course of OSD may result in detrimental socioeconomic and psychological consequences, such as job loss and long-term unemployment. For SMEs there is increasing pressure, in this time of recession, to improve their competitiveness by reducing costs.

Established scientific data demonstrate the outstanding effectiveness of OSD prevention in some European countries. Dermatologists by their specific knowledge and competence - in cooperation with other disciplines - can save their patients' health and jobs, and thus reduce high costs for tax-payers and insurance systems. Thus, the EADV "**healthy skin @work / europrevention**" campaign starts a co-ordinated scientific effort for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole. The campaign seeks to raise public and political awareness to the problem of OSD and the greatly improved knowledge on the possibilities of their prevention. The scientific progress achieved in this field should be made available to every EU-citizen and disseminated to the work places. The campaign will start in 2010, and last until this goal is accomplished.