

## Occupational Cancer Research Centre's stakeholder community identifies research priorities

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has identified nearly 60 workplace factors and substances as carcinogenic to humans, and lists an additional 100 as probable carcinogens (1). Recent estimates suggest that many Ontarians continue to be exposed to cancer-causing substances in the workplace (2).

The Occupational Cancer Research Centre (OCRC) was established to identify, prevent and ultimately eliminate Ontarians' exposure to cancer-causing substances in the workplace. Their mandate is to support community action, public education, prevention, legislation, and policy development.

During the summer of 2009, OCRC consulted a broad spectrum of stakeholders through an online survey to help establish its research priorities. The survey was completed by 177 participants from academia, government, labour unions, non-governmental organizations, industry, health and safety organizations, and health care institutions.

Respondents identified nearly 150 workplace exposures and occupations as priorities for research. Chemicals, respirable fibres (usually asbestos), radiation, shiftwork and nanomaterials were the most frequently mentioned types of exposures. Healthcare workers, firefighters, miners, construction workers, farmers and welders were the most commonly identified occupations needing attention.

**Type of workplace exposures identified as research priorities by stakeholders**



Source: 2009 Occupational Cancer Research Centre stakeholder consultation

- Nearly 150 workplace exposures and occupations were identified as being in need of research by OCRC stakeholders.
- There were both similarities and differences in how stakeholder groups prioritized topics.

There were both similarities and differences in how topics were prioritized by participants when grouped by stakeholder constituency. All groups identified well-known carcinogens such as chemicals, engine, exhaust, and asbestos. While newer topics such as shiftwork and nanotechnology ranked highly overall, they were only identified by some groups.

This survey provides OCRC with valuable information on priority issues in occupational cancer research, and will help the Centre chart a research program to meet public health needs.

**To see a full report on the Occupational Cancer Research Centre Stakeholder Consultation, go to:**

- <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=62561>.

**For more information, see:**

- Occupational Cancer Research Centre at <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/OCRC>

**References**

1. International Agency for Research on Cancer. IARC Monographs. Available at: <http://monographs.iarc.fr/>. Accessed February 18, 2010.
2. CAREX Canada, 2008.

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This Ontario Cancer Fact was prepared by the Occupational Cancer Research Centre.



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