

There were 24 attendees at this lunch meeting.

Keith introduced Dr. Seidemann and Andry Nowosiwsky.

Presentations:

1) Dr. Seidemann discussed the debate about the significance of 10dBA shifts in audiograms, and the eventual change of the Hearing Conservation standard by OSHA. He outlined the steps to follow-up on the standard threshold shift, including the determination of work- related exposure. He has done testing of NRR effectiveness— using microphones used both on workers' collars and inside of muffs and/ or earplugs.

Q & A:

- Are any of Dr. Seidemann's study results published?
 - The findings were published in the Occupational Safety & Health Journal, and have been presented at meetings for various national organizations. The IH/ Environmental/ Occupational Health field has not responded with any enthusiasm.
- In what scale is the NRR for hearing protective devices based?
 - It is based upon the dBA scale. Whole and half octave bands are used to reflect specific frequencies and standard deviation.
- Is there a difference in study results from different industries, and are these differences related to different training levels of workers?
 - There is little difference from one industry to the next, and employees with various levels of training are included in the study.
- Is double hearing protection needed in high noise areas if NRR's are accurate?
 - Dr. Seidemann would have his workers' use double hearing protection to be safe. Double protection is better than single protection, but the protection is not doubled.
- An employer has to be careful of reduction of noise below a certain level for safety reasons.
 - You have to issue PPE relative to potential noise exposure. Do not just buy the products having the highest NRR and hand them out freely to employees.
- What is your opinion about noise cancellation equipment?
 - In general industry, there is not much use. I do not have an opinion on its use.

- Would you [Dr. Seidemann] or OSHA recommend annual audiograms on periodic employees?
 - You should conduct audiograms and noise level surveys just to have documentation and to protect your company in the future. You can show, in numbers that any STS in periodic employees may not be work- related.

2) Andry Nowosiwsky presented the Hearing Conservation Program in use at his company. He presented the differences in expected noise attenuation (given by the NRR) and the actual noise attenuation. Andry listed the reasons that employees do not wear hearing protection 100% of their work shifts, including discomfort, wear time and reduced ability to communicate with others. In field attenuation of hearing protective devices are not equal to NRR. After offering suggestions to enhance hearing protection options (providing workers earplugs of different sizes), Andry gave an overview of cost-benefit of having a low noise work environment.

Q & A:

Andry asked that instead of a more formal Q & A session, that the membership participate in a round table discussion.

Keith presented a “thank you” gift to Dr. Seidemann for presenting to the membership.

Also, he announced the October 19, 2006 meeting with the Kean Miller Law Group.

** Please direct any questions about meeting minutes to deepsouthsection@yahoo.com