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Development of the Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians and its Influence to OHS system in Latvia

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IEGULDĪJUMS TAVĀ NĀKOTNĒ



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The Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians



The Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians

- The Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians **was founded in 1994**.
- Over the years it has become one of the largest Latvian Medical Societies.
- The study **aims** to assess the development of the Society and its impact on different areas of occupational health.



The Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians

- **Materials and methods.** **Data** from the Registry of Occupational physicians and the State Registry of Occupational diseases run by the Center of Occupational and Radiation Medicine of Paula Stradins Clinical University hospital. **Incidence** of occupational diseases were calculated per 100 000 employees. Statistical data on the mandatory health checks from the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI).



The development of Latvian Society of occupational physicians in 18 years

□ Data from the **Registry of Latvian Occupational Physicians** reveal that the number of physicians has grown by years

1994th – **35 physicians**

2000th – **314 physicians**

2010th – **449 physicians**

2012th - **455 physicians**

The number of members in 18 years has increased **12,3 times**



What were our decisions? Updating course for physicians already working

☐ Background (1994)

- Very **few** occupational physicians – in 1994 (35 physicians)

■ **Decisions to:**

- ☐ reorganise training process and create sufficient pool of physicians to provide health examinations and diagnostics of occupational diseases for all Latvia
- ☐ re-train so called «shop physicians» working in in-house units of large companies (starting 1994)



Training for postgraduates on occupational medicine (health)

- New training system for occupational physicians was created:
- **2 ways** to get certificate of occupational physician:
 - Residency – 4 years
 - Updating course for physicians already working – 500 hours (1year)



Updating course for occupational physicians already working

- **Training** is provided by:
 - Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine and IOSH of Riga Stradins University and Association of Latvian Occupational Physicians;
 - Invited external specialists (insurance, infectology, personal protective equipment etc.).



Residency in occupational medicine

- ❑ Training for **residents** in Occupational Health - 4 academic years programme,
- ❑ In line with EU programme requirements,
- ❑ On average 1-3 residents per year,
- ❑ Quality is OK as 3 of our occupational physicians already working in EU countries...



Training of students



Occupational Medicine in Latvia

- ❑ Occupational medicine in Latvia is **a speciality in its own right.**
- ❑ This is a reason why the speciality **is popular as the other training for many physicians.**



Occupational Physicians in Latvia

- ❑ The most of occupational physicians work in **private sector** (private medical centres), but at the same time a large part of them work also as family physicians.
- ❑ Only about 40 occupational physicians work as **company doctors** (in large companies).
- ❑ 15 occupational physicians are working in **Occupational medicine center** of University Hospital.



Functions of Occupational physician (OP) in Latvia

- ❑ provides regular mandatory health checks (MHC) for employees;
- ❑ according to results of MHC, OP can give some advices for employer for safer work conditions;
- ❑ OP can visit work place and evaluate working conditions of employee, who was sent for MHC;
- ❑ OP examines employees estimating probable occupational diseases;
- ❑ OP can prescribe medicines and treat work-related health problems.



Main objectives of the Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians (1)

- To **develop** occupational health and occupational medicine **speciality** in Latvia,
- to participate in OHS **strategy development**,
- to take part in the **development of regulatory documents**,
- to bring **qualification of specialists**,



Main objectives of the Latvian Society of occupational physicians (2)

- to **organize** the participation in Latvian and international courses, seminars and conferences,
- 5 NIVA courses have been held in Riga etc.



NIVA courses in Riga



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Collaboration with international partners



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International Conference in Minsk, 1996



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Occupational health physicians investment analysis in OSH system

- Occupational health physicians investment analysis in occupational health and safety (OHS) system development suggests that:
- physicians have **taken part in the legislative improvement of OHS system development,**
- participated in the work of the European Commission, WHO;







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Occupational health physicians investment analysis in OSH system

- improved mandatory **health checks quality** and improved **diagnostic of occupational diseases;**
- occupational physicians have brought **popularity in the the country** enhancing cooperation with trade unions, employers and other practitioners;



Occupational health physicians investment analysis in OSH system

- This has resulted in **decreased number of companies in which employees are not made mandatory health checks**. If in 2005 and 2006 years health checks were not provided in about **50%** of the companies, then the last three years - in about **15%** of the companies.



Occupational morbidity in Latvia

- **Occupational morbidity** in Latvia during the period from **1995 till 2011** characterizes general situation in occupational health and safety system.
- The number of firstly diagnosed occupational diseases and patients **has gradually increased** from 1995 until 2009 exhibiting small decline for 2011.

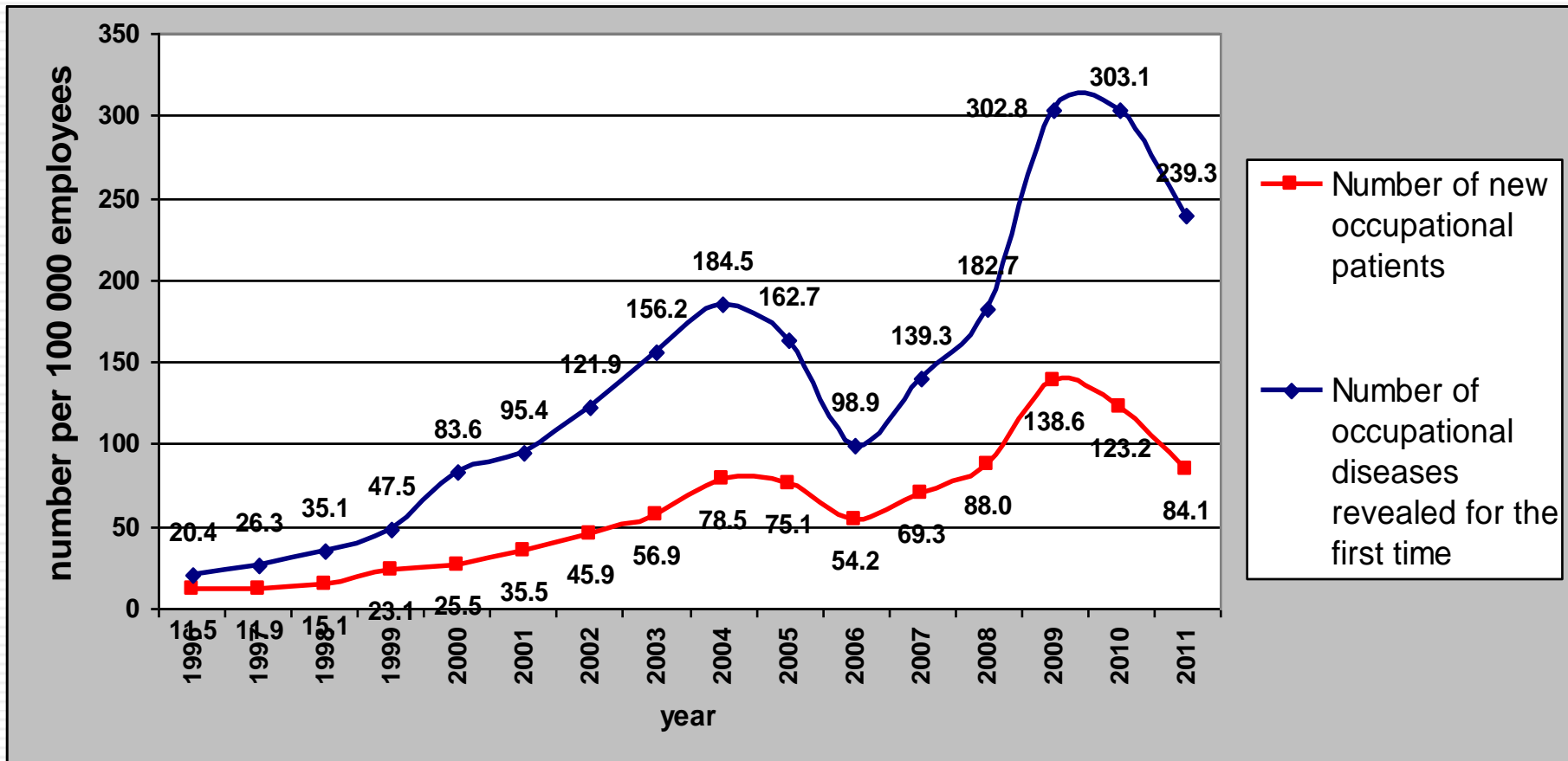


Occupational morbidity in Latvia

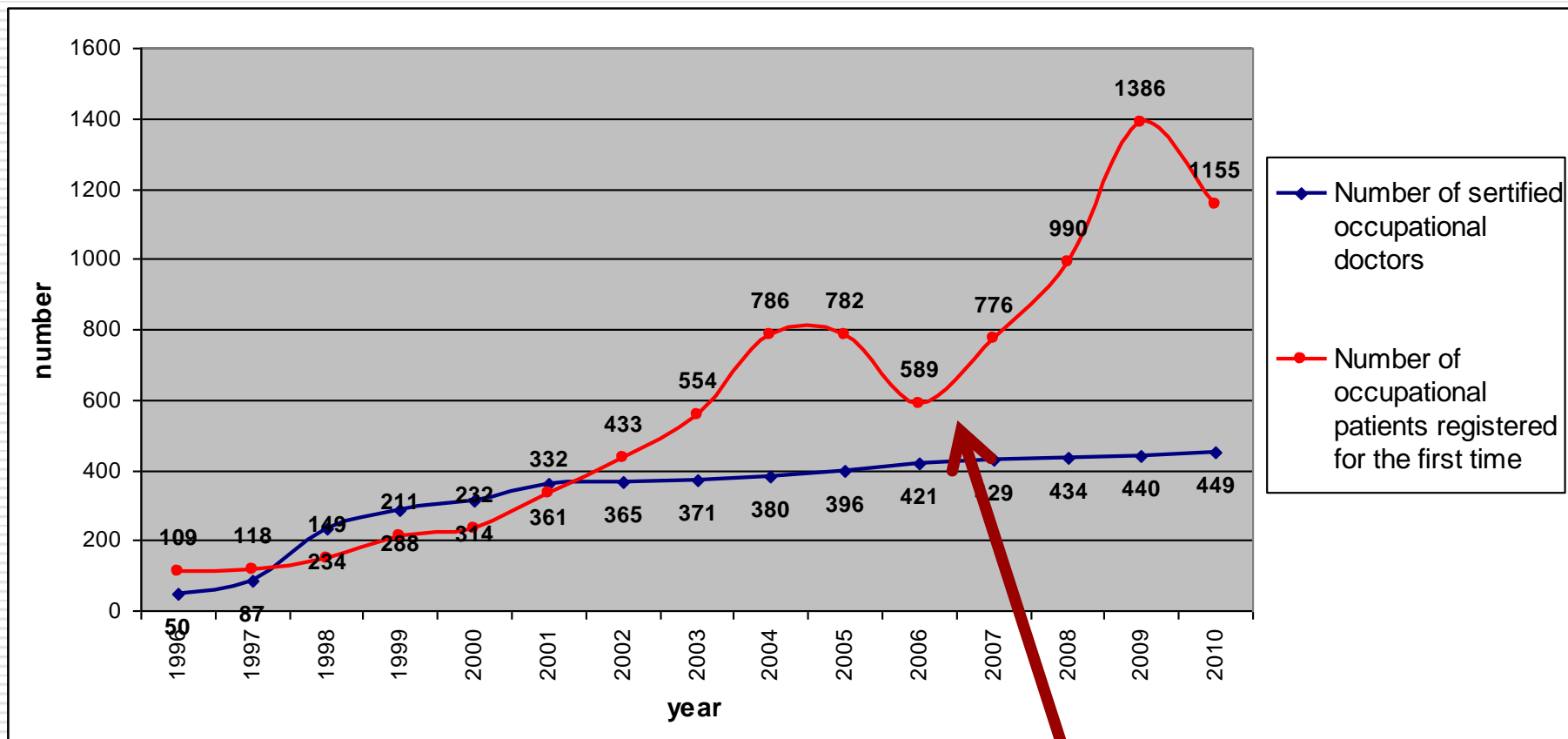
- The total number of firstly diagnosed and registered occupational patients per 100 000 employees **has risen from 11.2 in 1995 to 138.6 – in 2009 (12,4 times)!**
- The increase in occupational morbidity is also related to the increasing number of occupational physicians.



Dynamics of Occupational Morbidity per 100 000 Employees



Total Number of Occupational Physicians Registered in Latvia and Dynamics of Number of Occupational Patients Registered for the First Time per Year



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Political decision to give examination
rights back also to general practitioners
– WRONG decision changed after 2 years

Occupational morbidity in Latvia

- ❑ The decrease of occupational morbidity in 2006 and 2007 could be explained by the political decision to give examination rights back also to family doctors. It was wrong decision changed after 2 years.
- ❑ Correct decision after 2007 - **decision to give over rights to carry out health checks only to occupational physicians!**



Occupational morbidity in Latvia

- ❑ **Political decisions** towards system for diagnosis and registration of occupational diseases in Latvia has been succesful.
- ❑ **Increase of registered occupational diseases** is not only related to increasing number of occupational physicians but also growing awareness of employees, as well as possibility to receive compensation.



Occupational morbidity in Latvia

- ☐ **State compulsory social insurance against occupational accidents and occupational diseases was introduced in 1997.**
- ☐ Compensation for damage incurred during work is provided from resources of employers (social insurance).



Preparation of information materials (1)

- 20 years ago only few books were available in Latvian and Russian in the field of occupation health and there was also absence of foreign literature;
- currently there are **20 new handbooks** for professionals published- "*Darba medicīna*", (*Darba vides riska faktori un strādājošo veselības* edicine of work) (M.Eglīte),2000.; "*(The risk factors and workers' health)*"
- there are more than **100** leaflets published;



Preparation of information materials (2)

- The first book in English "***Information notices on occupational diseases: a guide to diagnosis***" (co-author M.Eglīte), Luxembourg, the European Commission, 2009;

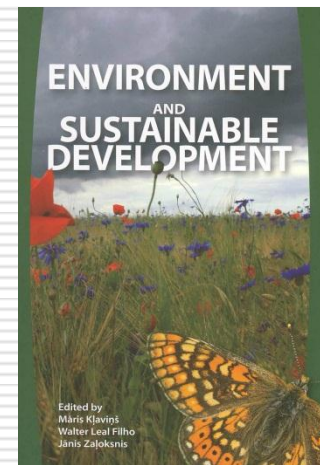
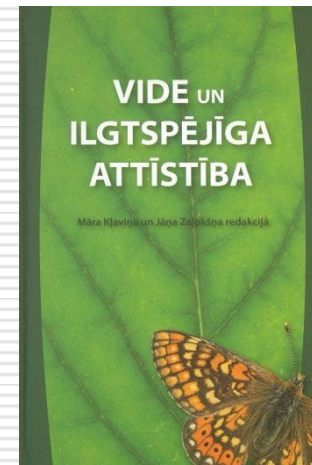
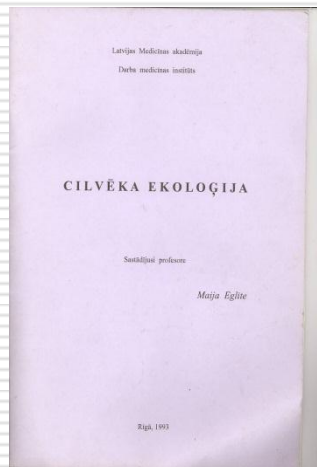
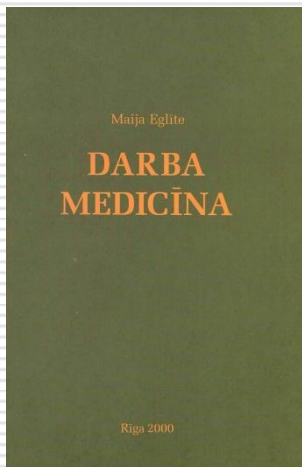
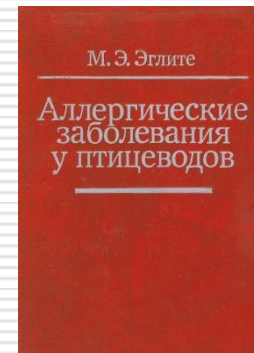
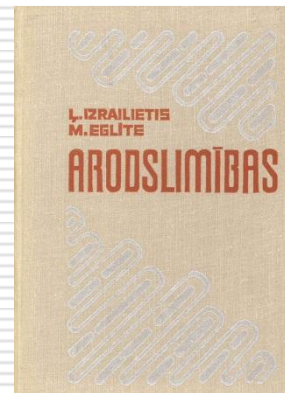
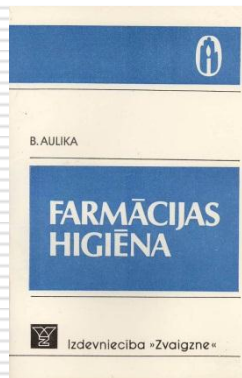
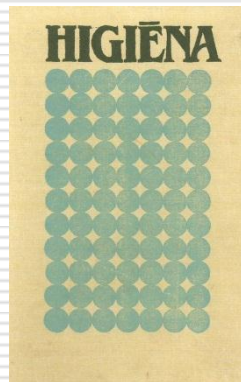
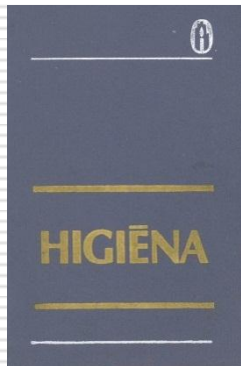


Information notices on occupational diseases: a guide to diagnosis



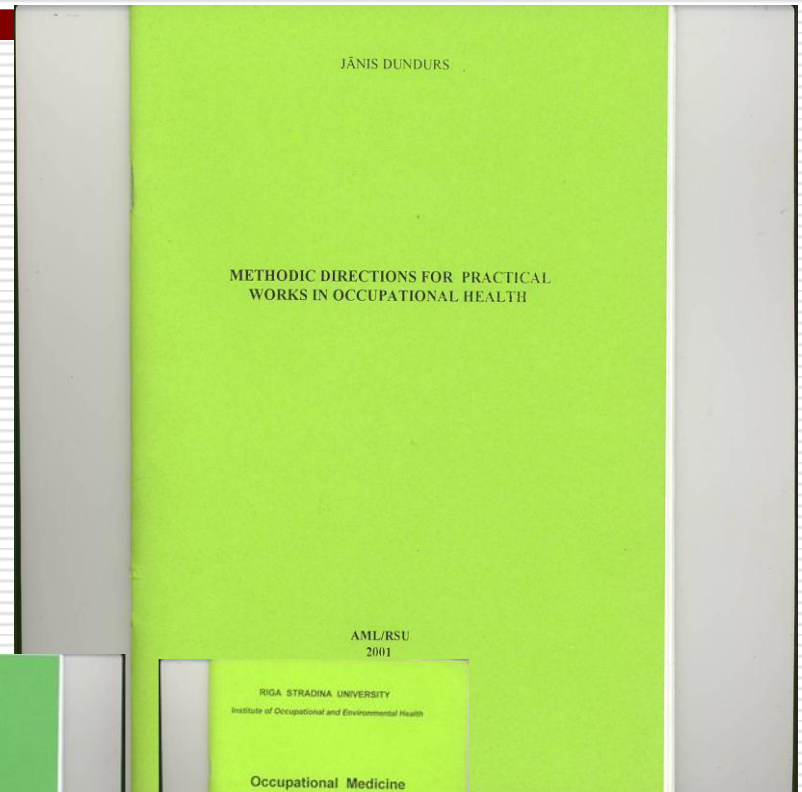
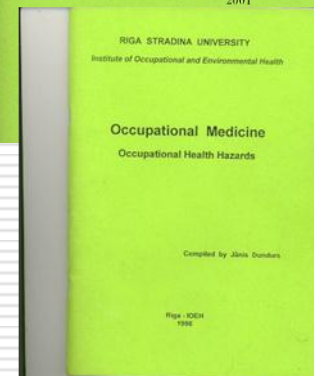
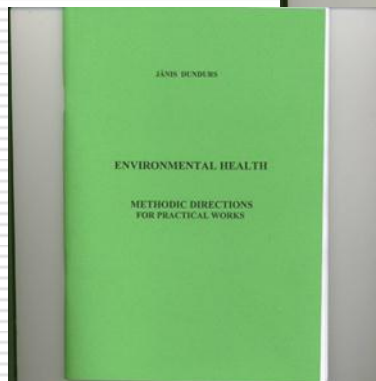
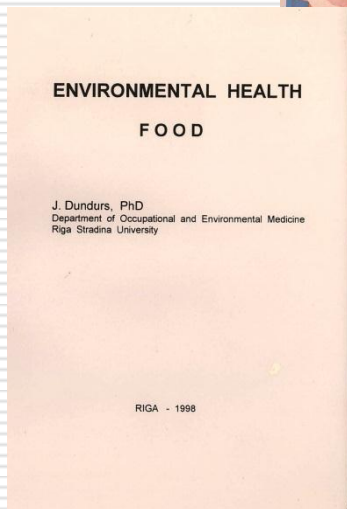
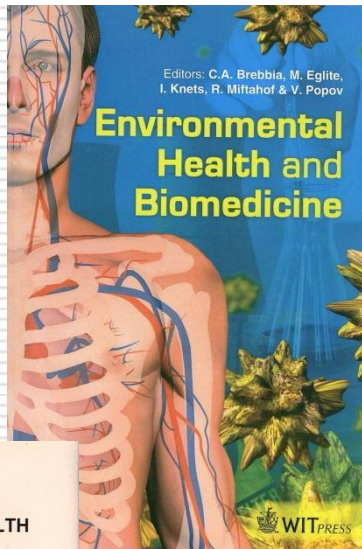
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Preparation of information materials (3)



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Preparation of information materials (4)



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Web pages

- We have built Latvian Society of Occupational Physicians web site: www.arodslimibas.lv
- We are Helping in the building of website of European Agency for Safety and Health at work: www.osha.lv



Conclusions

- Occupational physicians have made an important contribution to occupational safety and health system development in the country.**
- Results of the study could provide background information for policy makers in the area of occupational health and safety.**



A photograph of three men in an industrial setting. The man on the left wears a white hard hat, glasses, and a tan jacket, with his arms crossed. The man in the center wears a white hard hat with safety goggles, a blue shirt, and is writing in a notepad. The man on the right wears a white hard hat, glasses, and a blue jumpsuit. They are standing in front of industrial equipment, with a landscape visible in the background.

Paldies par uzmanību