Allergies Stats and Facts

CAUSES OF ALLERGIES

Allergies are extremely common in the general population. Allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and other allergy-related conditions, such as sinusitis, more of us at some time. Probably the most common allergens (those substances that can produce an allergic response) include dust mites and their excreta, dust, molds, pollens, foods and animal dander.

Bronchial asthma is also highly prevalent in the general population, affecting individuals across all ages. A 1990 study reported that as many as 400,000 to 3 million workers may have asthma.

More distressing is the reported recent increase in the incidence and severity of asthma. Although much speculation has been put forth as to the reasons (e.g., air pollution) for this increase, the underlying etiologic agent(s) have not been clearly elicited.

Comparatively few workplace substances have been noted to cause allergic rhinitis hay fever. These include enzyme-containing detergents and trimellitic anhydride. Biologic allergens are associated with rhinitis. Some of these agents include wheat flour dust and its additives, western red cedar, psyllium and laboratory animal exposure.

Cost of Lost Productivity Stats

Cost of Lost productivity due to allergic rhinitis (hay fever) were compared toother selected medical conditions (work productivity short inventory)

- Both absenteeism and presenteeism (lost productivity while at work) were recorded.
- Costs were calculated using a standard hourly wage.

Allergic rhinitis was the most prevalent of the selected

conditions; 55% of employees reported experiencing allergic rhinitis symptoms for an average of 52.5 days, were absent 3.6 days per year due to the condition, and were unproductive 2.3 h per workday when experiencing symptoms. The mean total productivity (absenteeism + presenteeism) losses per employee per year were 593 US dollars for allergic rhinitis, 518 US dollars for high stress, 277 US dollars for migraine, 273 US dollars for depression, 269 US dollars for arthritis/rheumatism, 248 US dollars for anxiety disorder, 181 US dollars for respiratory infections, 105 US dollars for hypertension or high blood pressure, 95 US dollars for diabetes, 85 US dollars for asthma, and 40 US dollars for coronary heart disease. The mean total productivity loss per employee per year due to caregiving was 102 US dollars for pediatric respiratory infections, 85 US dollars for pediatric allergies, 49 US dollars for Alzheimer’s disease, and 42 US dollars for otitis media/earache.