BEFORE THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

learn how community health workers can help prevent heat stress

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WEBINAR FOR Migrant Clinicians Network

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Case Study
What could have been done differently in this case?

- Establish and enforce work/rest schedules
- Place water cooler near the worksite
- Seek medical attention immediately
Heat stress occurs when the body heats up too quickly and is unable to cool itself down.

Heat related deaths 2008-2013

During this 5 year period, an average of 28 workers died annually.
Extreme heat killed more people than hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and lightning combined. Climate change has already brought record-breaking heat to many parts of the US. As it progresses, deaths from heat stress are projected to grow substantially.

Source: Heat Index Climatology http://www.weather.gov/arx/heatindex_climatology

What other industries put workers at risk for heat stress?
Which of the following are symptoms of heat stress?

Symptoms

- Extreme thirst
- Rash
- Cramps
- Blurry vision
- Fatigue and weakness
- Nausea or dizziness
- Excessive sweating
- Chills
- Headache
- Dry, hot skin
- Fainting
Heat stress can quickly become very serious.

And if it’s not treated in time, can lead to very serious health problems—sometimes even death.

Images Via: State of California, Department of Industrial Relations, Heat Illness Prevention 2010 Employer Training PowerPoint
Which of the following are not ways to prevent heat stress?
Take breaks in the shade during the day.

Drink water before, during and after work.

Begin work early and take a break during the hottest part of the day.

Dehydration

Before working (AM)
50% of workers were dehydrated when they arrived at work

After working (PM)
75% of workers were dehydrated when leaving work.
Long sleeved cotton shirts, cotton pants, and a hat with a big brim can protect you best!

Make sure you still wear boots and gloves to protect yourselves from pesticides.
Case Study
What could have been done differently in this case?

Internal Temperature

4 out of 5 farmworkers registered a temperature over 100.4°F at some point when they were monitored throughout the work day.
What should you do if a worker is exhibiting signs of heat stress?

Treatment

- Move to a shaded area
- Loosen or remove clothing
- Drink potable water
- Splash cool water on the body-especially on the chest
- SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION
What agency is responsible for ensuring that workers are protected from heat stress?
Heat Stress and OSHA

_by law:_

☑ Employers must provide training to workers on the risks of heat stress.

☑ Workers must be paid for their time during training.

OSHA does not have a general heat stress standard, however employers are responsible for providing workplaces that are free of excessive heat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heat Index</th>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Protective Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 91°F</td>
<td>Lower (Caution)</td>
<td>Basic heat safety and planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91°F to 103°F</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Implement precautions and heighten awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103°F to 115°F</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Additional precautions to protect workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 115°F</td>
<td>Very High in Extent</td>
<td>Triggers even more aggressive protective measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples of Protective Measures

Risk level: Low
• Provide drinking water
• Provide adequate medical services
• Plan ahead when heat index is high, including worker heat safety training
• Encourage workers to wear sunscreen

Risk level: Moderate
In addition to the previous steps:
• Review heat-related illness topics with workers: how to recognize and prevent it, and what to do if someone gets sick
• Schedule frequent breaks in a cool, shaded area
• Acclimatize worker
• Set up buddy system
Risk Level: High
In addition to the previous steps:
• Alert workers of high risk conditions
• Limit physical exertion, adjust work activities (for example use mechanical lifts)
• Establish and enforce work/rest schedules

Risk Level: Extreme
In addition to the previous steps:
• Conduct physiological monitoring (e.g., pulse, temperature, etc)
• Stop work if essential control methods are inadequate or unavailable.
Role of Community Health Workers
Communicate the risks of heat stress

Inform workers about prevention strategies

Educate about the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers

Act as a trusted source of health information

Connect workers with medical and advocacy resources
Thanks for your participation!

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Please complete the participant evaluation

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References


This presentation is adapted from: Pesticide Hazards, Field Sanitation, and Heat Stress for Farmworkers: A Training Curriculum for Lay Health Educators was created for the Project - Institutionalizing Capacity to Improve Occupational Safety and Health of Farmworker Communities Nationwide. The curriculum and materials were developed by Farmworker Justice with support from Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

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