

**Ventilatory capacity of workers exposed to tea dust  
MD (Community Medicine) - 1989**

**D 9**

To ascertain the effects of exposure to tea dust this study was undertaken with the assistance of the world health organization. The study was restricted to estimation of the prevalence rate of chronic respiratory illnesses and the ventilatory function of workers engaged in tea blending. The workers exposed to tea dust had a statistically significant higher prevalence rate of chronic cough, chronic phlegm, chronic bronchitis, asthma and dyspnoea. The highest prevalence rates were seen in the workers who had been exposed to tea dust for over twenty years. The duration of exposure had a significant effect on the prevalence rate of chronic respiratory symptoms. The study did not reveal any effect of smoking on the prevalence of chronic respiratory symptoms. The study failed to show any relationship between the reduction in ventilatory function during shift and the dust levels to which the workers were exposed. There were many limitations in the dust concentration estimation. Exposure to tea dust causes disabling respiratory illnesses. Good occupational hygiene practice to reduce the dust level to protect the workers should be emphasized. Pre-employment and periodic medical examination is vital in identifying sensitive individuals and protecting against long-term effects of tea dust.