

## Introduction

Occupational health refers to the identification and control of the risks arising from physical, chemical, and other workplace hazards in order to establish and maintain a safe and healthy working environment. These hazards may include chemical agents and solvents, heavy metals such as lead and mercury, physical agents such as loud noise or vibration, and physical hazards such as electricity or dangerous machinery (*National Center for Home Food Preservation, 2012*).

Workers represent half of the global population and contribute greatly to the economic and social value of contemporary society. A substantial part of the general morbidity of the working population is related to work. The ultimate goal of ensuring that all workers in the world enjoy full physical and mental health is far from being achieved. Too many workers are exposed to unacceptable levels of occupational risks and fall victim to occupational diseases and work accidents, lose their working capacity and income potential, and still too few have access to occupational health services (*WHO, 2006*).

Occupational health services, provided at the workplace to address the health care needs of working populations have been identified as an important component of the public health strategy. These services can also make a significant contribution to other government initiatives, such as reducing health inequalities, reducing social exclusion and sickness absence, and by protecting and promoting the health of the working population occupational health services can help to reduce the overall burden of ill health in Europe (*WHO, 2012*).

Common workplace health and safety hazards include: communicable disease, transportation accidents, workplace violence, slipping and falling, toxic events, particularly chemical and gas exposure, getting struck by objects, electrocution or explosion, repetitive motion and ergonomic injuries, and hearing loss. Although some hazards are less likely to happen in some work spaces than others, it's important to assess which hazards are most damaging of the business and employees. Some may disrupt continuity more than others, some may pose more serious threats to employee welfare, and still others will result in the most time lost or be the most costly. What all these setbacks have in common is that thorough planning can forestall many of them (*INC, 2010*).

The food industry is a complex, global collective of diverse businesses that together supply much of the food energy consumed by the world population. Only subsistence farmers, those who survive on what they grow, can be considered outside of the scope of the modern food industry (*Wikipedia, 2009*).

Occupational health problems occur at work can include cuts, broken bones, sprains and strains, or amputations repetitive motion disorders hearing problems caused by exposure to noise ,vision problems or even blindness illness caused by breathing, touching or ingesting unsafe substances illness caused by exposure to radiation exposure to germs in healthcare settings. Good job safety and prevention practices can reduce risk of these problems. Workers have tried to stay fit, reduce stress, set up work area properly, and use the right equipment and gear, (*Medlineplus, 2010*).

PPE is defined in the Personal Protective Equipment at work regulations as all equipment (including clothing affording protection

against the weather) which is intended to be worn or held by a person at work which protects them against one or more risks to their health and safety. PPE includes equipment such as safety footwear, hard hats, high visibility waistcoats, goggles, life jackets, respirators and safety harnesses. Waterproof, weatherproof, or insulated clothing is subject to the regulations only if its use is necessary to protect employees against adverse climatic conditions that could otherwise affect their health and safety (*Healthy Working Lives, 2012*).

Occupational health nurses, as the largest single group of health care professionals involved in delivering health care at the workplace, have responded to these new challenges. They have raised the standards of their professional education and training, modernized and expanded their role at the workplace, and in many situations have emerged as the central key figure involved in delivering high quality occupational health services to the working populations (*WHO, 2012*).

### **Significance of the study:**

Egypt's Food Processing Industry (FPI) represents 50 per cent of total manufactured output and a strong annual growth rate of 20 per cent. The Egyptian food processing industry comprises 4,700 registered enterprises forming the formal sector which represent 20 per cent of total food processing enterprises, and employ roughly 250,000 skilled workers. About 87 per cent of the formal FPI companies are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It is estimated 80 percent of total food processing enterprises are informal (*Egyptian Chinese business council, 2010*). Occupational health nurse have special knowledge of workplace hazards and the relationship to the employee health status. Understand industrial hygiene principles of engineering controls, administrative



controls, and personal protective equipment. Have knowledge of toxicology and epidemiology as related to the employee and the work site (*Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2010*).