

NEWSLETTER



Occupational and Environmental Medicine Update and Construction Industry: Old and Emerging Occupational Hazards

March 17-19, 2011 in San Francisco (Thurs-Sat)

The Division of Occupational Medicine at the University of California San Francisco continues its tradition of providing Continuing Medical Education (CME) programs on March 17, 18 and 19, 2011. The course is designed to provide occupational health professionals with a review of clinical toxicology, epidemiology, and the evaluation of occupational and environmental diseases and injuries. The format for the CME builds on the approach of recent programs – one day on a focused topic and one and a half days focused on updates in occupational and environmental medicine.

The curriculum of the *first day* (March 17) focuses on the issues specifically pertinent to the health of construction workers. The day begins with a keynote address presented by Christine Branche of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) who will provide an "Overview of the Health and Safety Concerns in Construction." A second keynote address is presented by a representative of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) who will speak to the topic, "Construction Hazards – The OSHA Perspective."

The keynote addresses will be followed by a series of presentations adding to clinical perspectives on the Hazards in the Construction Industry. Hester Lipscombe from the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Duke Medical Center will address the issues of "Nail Gun and High Pressure Injection Injuries." Linda Morse from Kaiser Occupational Medicine will discuss the problems due to vibration in her presentation, "Good Vibrations NOT: Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome." Jane Gittleman from the CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training will address "Ergonomics in Construction." Alan Echt from the Engineering and Physical Hazards Branch NIOSH will address "Silica Exposure in Construction: New and Old Sources of Exposure." OiSaeng Hong from the Occupational and Environmental Health Nursing Program, UCSF will address "Implosive and Chronic Noise Exposure in Construction Trades." The day will finish with Michael Fischman who will address "Toxics in the Modern Construction Trades – Familiar and Novel Hazards."

The program is also designed to meet the needs of primary care providers and others engaged in an occupational health practice and research by focusing the curriculum for one and a half days (March 18-19) on the emerging issues in Occupational and Environmental Medicine. The program draws on the full time and affiliated UCSF faculty in the Division of Occupational Medicine. They will deliver presentations designed for 40 minutes followed by 15 minutes for questions and answers with questions for audience to evaluate their knowledge.

Updates on issues of exposure will be provided by Michael Bates speaking on "Biomass Smoke Exposure and Related Disease," by John Balmes on "Air Pollution: Population Level Effects and Clinical Implications," by Gina Solomon on "The Gulf Oil Spill Aftermath: Occupational Health and Environmental Impacts," by Craig Steinmaus on "Toxic Contaminations of Drinking Water: More than Microbes," by Soo-Jeon Lee on "Getting the Drift: Bystander and other Non-Occupational Pesticide Illness," and by Patty Quinlan on "Something Old and Something New: Personal Protection in the 21st Century".

Updates on issues in clinical practice will be provided by Johnathan Rutchik on "Novel Neurotoxins," by Dennis Shusterman on "Suddenly Short of Breath: Vocal Cord Dysfunction, Bronchospasm, or Panic Attacks?" by Robert Harrison on "Occupational Hazard Investigations: Unusual Outbreaks", by John Balmes on "Occupational and Environmental Agents and Lung Cancer," by Paul Blanc on "What the History of Occupational Disease Teaches Us about the Future", by David Rempel on "Emerging Occupational Ergonomic Problems and Solutions", and by Robert Kosnik on "Update on Occupationally-Related Infectious Disease: Health Care Workers, Lab Technicians, and Others."

The program will end with case presentations on "Mercury: New Sources of an Old Toxin," by a panel consisting of Rupali Das from the Exposure Assessment Section, California Department of Public Health, of Mark Miller from the UCSF Pediatric Exposure Health and Safety Unit, and of Craig Smollin from the California Poison Control Center, UCSF San Francisco Division.

At the end of the course, the attendees will have improved; medical knowledge derived from research findings, particularly from toxicological and epidemiologic investigations, increased skills to evaluate scientific data in the field of occupational and environmental health, and will be acquainted with practical applications of clinical diagnostic methods and improved treatment options for selected occupational and environmental conditions.

The course is being held at the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway Hotel, 1500 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco. The hotel is situated on the edge of Nob Hill in a central region of San Francisco, home to the 2010 World Series Champions, The San Francisco Giants.

For details on registration through the UCSF CME office, please link to:

<https://www.cme.ucsf.edu/cme/CourseDetail.aspx?coursenumber=MDM11N01>

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UCSF Parnassus Division Faculty

Dr. Robert Kosnik is Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, University of California San Francisco (UCSF). Dr. Kosnik is a graduate of the University of Toronto and is a certified specialist in Occupational Medicine in both the U.S. and Canada. In Canada, his practice provided professional services for over 20 years in many different service models to a variety of industry sectors, including health care. Dr. Kosnik provides leadership to UCSF Occupational Health Services with a focus on maintaining the health of the staff and on preventing the transmission of communicable diseases in the UCSF Medical Center and the research laboratories. Dr. Kosnik has contributed to professional associations as a past President of the Occupational and Environmental Association of Canada, a past Chair of the examination committee for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in the speciality of Occupational Medicine and President of the Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics in the United States.

Dr. Robert Harrison is Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California San Francisco, where he has served on the faculty since 1984. He founded and directed the UCSF Occupational Health Services for over 15 years, and now is a senior attending physician. He has diagnosed and treated over 10,000 patients with work- and environmental-induced diseases and injuries. He also directs the worker tracking an investigation program for the California Department of Public Health. He received his BA from the University of Rochester and MD from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is board certified in both Internal Medicine and Occupational Medicine. He has served on the CalOSHA Standards Board, and authored numerous publications in the area of occupational medicine.

Dr. Paul D. Blanc is Professor of Medicine and Endowed Chair in Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the University of California San Francisco, where he has been on faculty since 1988. He currently serves as Chief of the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Board certified in internal medicine, occupational medicine, and medical toxicology, he also serves as Associate Medical Director, California Poison Control System, San Francisco Division. He received his BA from Goddard College (Plainfield, Vermont), where he first became interested in health and the environment. He trained at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Albert Einstein School of Medicine. He has authored numerous scholarly publications on the subject of toxic exposures and illness and is author of the general interest book, *How Everyday Products Make People Sick* (Updated and expanded edition, 2009, University of California Press). Dr. Blanc also written a blog hosted by Psychology Today <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/household-hazards>.

Report from the SFGH OEM Division

The sister Division of the Parnassus Campus Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine is based at San Francisco General Hospital, with its faculty also active at the Richmond Field Station under the aegis of UC Berkeley. Dr. John Balmes, chief of that Division, was recently honored for his contributions to the field of occupational health by the Western Occupational and Environmental Medical Association with the 2010 Rutherford T. Johnstone memorial lecture and award. He also was recently awarded two major 3-year grants. His Human Exposure Laboratory is one of three labs awarded funding from the Health Effects Institute to work together to conduct a large controlled human exposure study of the potential cardiovascular effects of ozone. The Center for Environmental Public Health Tracking that he directs at UC Berkeley was awarded a research contract from the CDC to work with states to assess potential regional differences in the exposure-response relationship between fine particulate matter and hospitalizations for cardiovascular diseases.

Dr. David Rempel, also of the SFGH Division, was recently awarded a large 3-year grant from NIOSH to conduct a pooled longitudinal analysis of workplace carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). He and his research team will pool the data from seven prospective studies of US production workers to quantify exposure-response relationships between biomechanical risk factors and incidence of CTS while controlling for important covariates such as age, sex, BMI, psychosocial factors). One of Dr. Rempel's doctoral students, Carissa Harris, won the best paper award at PREMUS 2010 (7th International Scientific Conference on Prevention of Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders) for presentation of work done on one of the prospective studies of upper extremity repetitive strain disorders that will be part of the pooled analysis.

2010 has been an eventful year for the UCSF OEM Residency/ Fellowship Program, which has its home at SFGH. Over the past 3 years, the program has been ably co-directed by Drs. Gina Solomon and Sarah Jewell. After many years with the SFGH OEM division, Dr. Jewell moved with her husband to Germany where they both took positions at the University of Bonn. Dr. Stephen Born has taken on her role with the residency. Meanwhile, Gina Solomon has played a major role in increasing awareness of the health impacts of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico after the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig. In addition to her testimony before the House of Representatives subcommittee on Energy and the Environment in June, she has been interviewed in numerous media reports and has been posting an active blog on the consequences of this environmental disaster. She and Dr. Sarah Janssen (and OEM residency alumna) wrote a commentary on the health effects of the Gulf oil spill that was published in JAMA in September.

Faculty Book Publication

This past June, UCSF Today carried a report by Kate Rauch concerning the release *How Everyday Products Make People Sick* (<http://today.ucsf.edu/stories/re-released-book-cites-historical-cases-leading-to-todays-toxic-environment/>). Part of that Rauch's report and interview with Dr. Blanc is excerpted here:

Two-thousand year ago, the Roman architect, Vitruvius, warned of the dangers of using lead pipes. "Water from clay pipes is much more wholesome than that which is conducted through lead pipes, for lead is found to be harmful," he wrote in a treatise for "Ten Books on Architecture," around 25 BC. Vitruvius went on: "When lead is smelted in casting, the fumes from it settle upon their members and day after day burn out and take away all the virtues of the blood from their limbs." To Paul Blanc, MD, Endowed Chair in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, this nugget of ancient history should stand as an "I told you so," to 21st Century professionals working on current lead exposure problems, such as the recent rash of lead contaminated toys and lead-leaching Astro turf. One would think, Blanc believes, that over the course of a couple thousand years, society would get a handle on the dangers of lead. Instead, he maintains, significant lessons from the history of toxins such as lead get lost through the years, obliterated by consumerism—or the supply and demand for more, better, faster and cheaper things.

With amazing detail that belies the meticulous scientist and nitpicky historian that he is, Blanc reveals the tell-tale history of today's risky chemicals in his recently re-released book *How Everyday Products Make People Sick: Toxins at Home and in the Workplace* (University of California Press). First published in 2007, the book's title doesn't really do its contents justice. Far more than a guide to today's lurking toxic dangers, "How Everyday Products Make People Sick" is a dense and carefully-cited trip back in time with numerous common chemicals, visiting the often striking accidents, illnesses and deaths that prove their culpability as potential bad agents....The book is more of a scholarly knuckle-rapping to today's toxic oversight efforts for characteristically ignoring history and tackling age-old problems as if they're new. Blanc views this revisionist, short-term memory mentality as absurd in the face of a long road of science that's invaluable to establishing safe chemical uses. In his own words:

Q: Your book was first published in 2007 (to great reviews); why did you decide to re-release it in 2009? A: So much had transpired in a short time – including emerging issues mentioned in 2007 that have since become headlines, such as lead in toys, "popcorn lung" from the artificial flavoring agent diacetyl, mine disasters, US soldiers exposed to home-made chlorine-bombs; and even the BP oil spill.

Q: With occupational and environmental exposures, why is this historical view so important? A: The old adage that without learning from the past we are condemned to repeat it is very applicable to health and safety on the job and in the environment, including in the home environment.

Q: You discuss the tendency for environmental revisionist thinking, where society, or at least governments and corporations, tend to "forget" well-documented hazards learned from the past. Why don't these toxic lessons stick? A: It is certainly in the vested interest of those who profit from these products to have people forget – it is a kind of consumer un-marketing. Since physicians and nurses are rarely educated about these issues there is little continuity on the health care treatment side either.

Q: Why should doctors and medical students read your book? A: Not just physician but nurses and hygienists and lawyers and policy makers should read it. This is not a narrow "medicalized" problem, but a public health issue in the broadest sense.

Q: How can governments do a better job of protecting citizens? A: Effective regulatory efforts require a public-protective pro-active strategy – coordinated and with "teeth" – the ongoing Gulf oil fiasco underscores this better than any other recent example.



Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, CA

The 4th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health

The 4th International Conference on the History of Occupational and Environmental Health was held at UCSF, June 19 – 22, 2010, the conference for the first time being held on the American continent (after Rome, Norköpping and Birmingham in previous years). The conference was organized by the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine with support from a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) special conference grant for which Paul Blanc was Principal Investigator. The meeting was co-sponsored by International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Special Committee on History of Prevention of Occupational and Environmental Diseases the Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH) at the University of California, and Gothenberg University (Sweden).

The Conference covered a half-day workshop and three full days, with 4 keynote presentations, 5 panel discussions and 10 original abstract sessions, including over 50 oral presentations. Attendees included 135 scholars from more than 15 countries. The speakers and other participants included many of the leading US and European historians of occupational health. The Division of Occupational and Environmental Health at both Parnassus Heights and San Francisco General Hospital and the Occupational Health Nursing unit were well represented in presentations and in session facilitators. The conference also features a pre-meeting workshop focused on methods in the investigations in the history of occupational and environmental health. Keynote lectures were delivered by Christopher Sellers ("Occupation, Environment, and Health: A History of Interdependence"), David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz ("Movements for Occupational and Environmental Health: History and politics"), and Robert Proctor ("Occupational Medicine under the Nazis"). The conference also included a reading by Philip Levine ("Working Life – A Poet's Perspective"); Levine is known as "poet of the working-class" and was a winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1995.

The Conference set foundations for developing new research networks on the history of occupational and environmental health; a follow-up conference is in the initial planning for Amsterdam in 2013. The conference proceedings will be published in 2011 in the Perspectives in Medical Humanities book series. This series is a relatively new, digital publication effort on the part of the University of California Medical Humanities Consortium in partnership with the prestigious University of California Press and the California Digital Library. This series of edited books and monographs aims to represent innovative views about and within medicine and the health sciences and has selected our conference proceedings as consistent with that mission. Dr. Brian Dolan from UCSF will be co-editing the conference proceedings volume with Dr. Blanc. To see more about Perspectives in Medical Humanities:

<http://medicalhumanities.ucsf.edu/book-series.html>

Residency and Fellowship in Occupational and Environmental Medicine at UCSF

UCSF has been a center for training in Occupational and Environmental Medicine (OEM) since 1977. Graduates of our program are leaders in environmental and occupational medicine in academics, government agencies, NGOs, and corporations. The UCSF OEM training program is accredited by ACGME and provides the qualifications required for Board Certification in Occupational Medicine by the American Board of Preventive Medicine.

Description of Training

Occupational and Environmental Medicine typically entails two years of training. In the first year, Residents or Fellows obtain a Masters in Public Health (MPH) at the University of California at Berkeley. The year at Berkeley provides excellent training in occupational and environmental epidemiology, public policy, environmental health sciences, health behavior, health education, biostatistics, ergonomics, industrial hygiene, and toxicology. Trainees attend classes and begin a research project during the first year, while participating in clinical activities in occupational and environmental medicine at UCSF.

The second year focuses on supervised practical training, including time in clinics; local, state, federal or international governmental agencies; NGOs; academic; consulting; and industry settings. Trainees participate in patient care activities in university and community-based clinics for occupational or environmental injuries and illnesses, infectious disease prevention services, toxicology consultations, and placement and surveillance examinations of workers. The training includes site visits to various workplace and community settings to evaluate occupational and environmental health risks. The rotations and site visits are supplemented by weekly clinical case conferences, biweekly grand rounds, research seminars and journal clubs.

Trainees also design and complete a 1-2 year research project investigating a topic of interest to them in environmental or occupational medicine. Research opportunities are available in occupational and environmental lung injury, ergonomics/cumulative trauma injury, neurotoxicology, injury epidemiology, heavy metal toxicity, and environmental health.

For more information about the residency link to <http://coeh.berkeley.edu/ucsfoem/> or email the residency director Dr. Gina Solomon at: gina.solomon@ucsf.edu.

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UCSF Division of Occupational & Environmental Medicine
and its annual seminar



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