

# A Descriptive Study Of Bagassosis Among Filipino Sugar Refinery Workers

Research Paper No. 1993-06



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## **A descriptive study of bagassosis among Filipino sugar refinery workers**

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### **Abstract**

Bagassosis, an occupational lung disease caused by allergic reaction to molds in stored bagasse, has attracted attention since 1962. But its prevalence and associated risk factors have remained unexplored in the area of occupational health. The OSHC study in 1993 aimed to provide baseline information on the prevalence of respiratory symptoms indicative of bagassosis among 482 sugar-mill workers in three sugar refineries in the Philippines.

A questionnaire on respiratory symptoms, including specific questions related to hypersensitivity pneumonitis, was administered. In addition, chest X-ray and pulmonary function studies (VC, FVC, FEV 1.0) were undertaken.

The results show that acute bagassosis as indicated by antigen exposure and clinical manifestation was noted in 1.86% of the sample population. Pulmonary function tests showed a restrictive defect in 24% of the subjects. However, chest X-ray changes of fibrosis and restrictive ventilator defects were noted in 0.6% of the workers examined.

The present results show that acute bagassosis is a potential risk problem despite current low prevalence among sugar refinery workers. Exposed workers should be alerted to its dangers and precautions recommended to prevent occurrence. The study demonstrated that current

methods of bagasse storage, as heaps in open areas, eliminate the moist environment where thermophilic actinomycetes predominate.