

Survey on the Health Effects of Organophosphate Exposure Among Farmers in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine farmers' knowledge and practices on pesticide use as well as to determine the association of pesticide exposure and symptoms experienced by farmers using organophosphates/ carbamates and pesticide mixtures in the municipalities of Buguias in Benguet and Bauco in the nearby Mt. Province. Respondents came from two farmers cooperatives engaged in vegetable garden farming.

Results revealed that the most common pesticides used by respondents were: Carbamates (78%), organophosphates (56%), some farmers using banned and restricted pesticides, such as Endrin and Mevinphos. Improvised personal protection or PPEs were used by all respondents when handling pesticides. These included the use of towels as masks, inappropriate gloves and jackets instead of work clothes. Most frequent symptoms experienced by the subjects were muscle cramps, weakness and respiratory tract irritation, symptoms which are fairly common in pesticide exposure. Results also showed the dearth of information and guidance to farmers of government agencies on the safe use of pesticide.

The findings contributed to the understanding of safety and health problems of farmers specially those exposed to pesticides. Farmers' training, information dissemination on the safe use and handling of pesticides are immediate activities that can be done by concerned agencies. In addition, attention should also be given on the enforcement of laws on the rational use

and disposal of pesticides and the protection of the farmers from these toxic chemicals