

ABSTRACT

Introduction/Background: Occupation safety and health risk factors vary depending on the specific industry and kind of sector. Statistics for Uganda alone on occupational safety and health cannot be easily established due to a number of factors. In Uganda, the government has put in place regulations on occupational health and safety Act 2006 that are to be practiced by employees after being sensitized. However, the factors influencing adherence to these safety preventing measures among the rice factories in Mbale district are not well understood.

Main objective: I assessed the factors influencing the adherence to safety and preventive measures among workers in rice factories in Mbale district.

Methodology: The study was a descriptive cross sectional design that employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. The study population was the rice factory workers with a sample size of 384 who were randomly sampled from Mbale district in the Eastern region of Uganda. The dependent study variable was adherence to safety and preventive measures and independent variable were demographic characteristics of the factory workers, their knowledge factors, practice factors and institutional factors. We used a structured questionnaire to collect the quantitative data and a focus group discussion guide to collect the qualitative data from the respondents after pre-testing the tools. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and presented in form of tables, charts and graphs, while the qualitative data was manually analyzed and presented in form of quotations as verbatim.

Results: The response rate was 81.77% (314/384) of which the majority (80.89%) were male. Most of the respondents (39.17%) were between 16-20 years of age. Further analysis revealed that there was no significant demographic characteristic (sex, age, marital status, education, religion, years worked, hours worked and earnings) that influenced the adherence to use of gloves and recommended shoes. Similarly, there was no significant knowledge factor that influenced the adherence to use of gloves and recommended shoes. However, the PPEs used by the rice factory workers significantly influenced their adherence to the safety and preventive measures (P value <0.000) but the other practice factors (ever

got OH, kind of OH got, causes of OH, how OH are treated, PPE provided, use of face masks, use of head caps) were found not to have a statistically significant influence. The rice factory worker having had training on safety after their job (P value=0.048) and other rice factory workers saying they had the guidelines available at work (P value=0.022) were institutional factors significantly influencing adherence to the safety and preventive measures, as further emphasized by the focus group discussants.

Conclusions and recommendations:

The types of PPE used by the rice factory workers, a rice factory worker having had training on safety immediately on acquiring the job and having guidelines available at work were significant influencers to their adherence to the safety and preventive measures.

I therefore, recommend to the factory administration to provide the types of PPE to the rice factory workers that they will influence them adhere to and as guided by the Ministry of Health OH Guidelines, train the rice factory workers on how to use the PPEs immediately on acquiring the job so as to strengthen their adherence, provide guidelines to the rice factory workers at all times while at work. The district health office on the other hand should provide facilitators for the trainings distribute the guidelines and supervise and monitor the use of PPEs, while the government should reinforce the occupational health hazards regulation on the safety of workers, and provide training manuals for workers on how to use PPEs through the Ministry of Health.