Welcome to Denmark and Domus Medica
Occupational Medicine in Denmark

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Outlines

- History
- Danish Society of Occupational Medicine
- Tasks
  - Clinical work
  - Prevention
  - Research
- Education and Training
- Occupational Diseases and Injuries in Denmark
- Main Challenges for the future
History

• 1872 The Danish Physician E. Hornemann’s research about children working in factories

• 1873 The first Labour Protection Act
  – Children and young people
  – Health and safety in the production
History

1920-1940

• Sophus Bang – toxicology of heavy metals
• Carl Sonne - pneumokoniosis/asbestosis
• Skuli Gudmundsson
  - First physician in the Danish Labour Protection Agency
• Poul Bonnevie - Occupational Skin disorders
History

• Newer history 1970 >
  – The Student revolts in Denmark resulted in a collaboration between medical students and the labor organizations and workplaces with focus on work environment.
  – Several critical reports about work environment in different branches with focus on ergonomics and toxicology
  – Political focus from the left wing parties and labour organizations on work environment
  – 1977 the new Working Environment Act with description of
    • regional Occupational Medicine Clinics and their tasks
    • plans of establishment of an Occupational Health and safety service with trained Occupational Physicians
    • mandatory memberships for companies of Occupational Health and Safety Service within the most dangerous industries.
  – 1977-78 Occupational Health Clinics at the university hospitals in Aarhus and Odense
History

Highlights:

• 1931 Institute of Hygiene Copenhagen University
• 1945 First consultant in Occupational Medicine in the Danish Labour Inspectorate
• 1946 First Occupational Medicine Clinic, now Bispebjerg
• 1954 New Labour Protection Act
  – Physicians in the labour inspectorate
• 1977 New Working Environment Act
  – Occupational Health Services
  – Occupational Medicine Clinics
Danish Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

1980
- Danish Society of Occupational Medicine
- Tasks:
  - Forum for medical doctors with special interest in Occupational Medicine
  - Education and training in Occupational Medicine
  - Promoting Research in Occupational Medicine

1984
- Recognition of Occupational Medicine as the area of expertise
- Members 2015:
  - 132 Physicians
  - 32 Psychologists and other groups
Population and Physicians in Denmark

2014

• Inhabitants
  • 5.511.451
  • 2.800 000 in the workforce

• Physicians
  • 19.840 physicians
  • 134 specialists in Occupational Medicine
  • 57 working in the specialty
Danish Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Age of Occupational Physicians

50 % > 60
Danish Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Main Tasks

• Advising the National Board of Health
• Specialist training
• Needs for specialists
• Development of the specialty
• Surveillance of developments in occupational and environmental diseases
• Clinical guidelines/Best practice (Armoni dk)
Danish Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

Main Tasks

• Developing highly specialized functions
  – Allergology
  – Toxicology
  – Rehabilitation
• Participate in the public debate
  – Health
  – Work environment
• Influence politicians and government
• Working for a better work environment both nationally and internationally.
Training

- The society is responsible for offering the theoretical part of specialist training

- Regional hospitals are responsible for offering the clinical part of specialist training

- The Society is responsible for offering Continuous medical education
Training

5 years

- 1 year introduction to clinical work

- 2 or 2½ years clinical training in an Occupational Medicine Clinic (One year can be substituted with work in another institution, e.g. research, social medicine, occupational health services and environmental health)

- 1½ or 2 years in psychiatry, rheumatology, lung diseases.
  - min. 6 months in each speciality
Training

Theoretical training and research – courses arranged by “The National Board of Health”
- Supervisor training
- Research methods
- Management
- Communication

Theoretical training and research – courses arranged by “Society of Occupational and Environmental Medicine”
- Research methods
- Epidemiology
- Risk assessment
- Health economics
- Law
- Risk communication
- Health promotion
- Project management
- Health policy
- International Work and Environmental Health

Theoretical training and research – arranged by “Occupational Medicine Clinics”
- Occupational diseases
- A research project of min. 3 months duration
Control of training

• The training is controlled by the National Board of Health.
  – No exams
  – Formative evaluation
  – (e-)Logbook
  – Evaluation of competencies
  – 360 degrees evaluation (external bedside evaluation, observation, interviews)
  – Research resulting in a PhD or peer-reviewed article, recognized by one of the professors in the specialty
Control of training

• The quality of training is controlled by the National Board of Health.

• Inspections

• Evaluation from the trainees.
Occupational Health Clinics

2009-2015 Number of Occupational Health Clinics reduced from 14-7

- All people in Denmark have access to an occupational physician
  - Referral from family doctor, labour organisation or the companies’ Health and safety committee
    - Clinical work
    - Diagnosing
    - Risk assessment
    - Advice
      - Treatment
      - Prevention (individual/company)
      - Return to work
      - Notification if work related disease
  - Teaching and information
  - Research
Occupational Health Services

- 1997-2004
  - Reduced from 118 to 24
Research

- Four clinical professors (Occupational Medicine Clinics at the five University clinics)
- One professor at the University in Aarhus
- One professor at the National Research Center for Working Environment
- 5-10 PhD finished pr. Year from the 7 Occupational Medicine clinics
- App. 7 mill. Euro yearly from the Working Environment Research Fund to research at the Occupational Medicine Clinics
Research - Topics

- Reproduction
- Musculoskeletal disorders and work
- Accident prevention
- Psychosocial work environment and disease
- Lung diseases and work environment
- Cancer and work
- Toxicology
Workers compensation Act

More than 117 years since 1898.

- Compensation claims for
  - Work related accidents
  - Work related diseases
Workers compensation Act

- Persons protected
  - All working in a paid or nonpaid job in a working situation comparable to that of employees
Definition of an occupational disease

• The disease must have developed due to exposures in the workplace and the correlation between the exposures and the disease should be well known in medical research.

• And it must not be likely, beyond reasonable doubt, that the disease is caused by factors other than work.

• The Director General of the National Board of Industrial Injuries can, after negotiations with the Occupational Diseases Committee, decide and make a list of what diseases should be recognized on the basis of research and recent medical documentation.
Benefits

• reimbursement of expenses for medical care, etc.
• compensation for loss of earning capacity (iii)
• compensation for permanent injury
• compensation for loss of breadwinner
• compensation for surviving dependants
Workrelated accidents
(2013: 20,000 cases, deaths 60)
Number of notified and recognized Occupational Diseases
Number of notified psychosocial work related diseases
Challenges – the speciality

• Age and generation shift among specialists
• Recruitment of young doctors to the specialty
Challenges – work environment

- Ageing workforce
- Migrant workers
- Globalisation of workforce
- Psychosocial diseases
- New diseases – new technology
- Return to work management
Future

• Focus on the positive effects of working life

• Focus on the professional future for all in workforce

• Focus on prognosis and counselling of persons with occupational diseases

• Increased focus on international Occupational and Environmental Medicine
Discussion and Questions