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## Respiratory illness among brick kiln workers – A cross sectional study

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Respiratory illnesses involve multiple parts of the respiratory system and include ear infections, sinusitis, upper respiratory illnesses, asthma, pneumonia, influenza and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Many individual factors and extrinsic factors such as exposure to environmental stimuli, different allergens, air pollution, exposure to dust, various particulate matter and tobacco smoke also contributes to respiratory illness. Air pollution from small and large-scale industrial areas has been considered dangerous to human health. Small-scale industries play a prominent role in environmental pollution. Amongst the small sectors, the brick kilns industry is growing very fast due to the rapid urbanization. In Asian countries, the workers are treated as bonded labourers, and they are working in conditions similar to slavery. The present study aimed to find out the extent of occupational hazards in terms of respiratory disorders among workers working at traditional and advanced brick kilns. The researcher took the cross sectional data, conducted on a sample of 251 subjects from traditional and advanced types of brick kilns from Maharashtra, state of India. The study found strong relationship between hazardous environmental conditions and the physical and respiratory health of brick kiln workers. The findings of the study indicate that most of the brick kiln workers are at higher risk of experiencing occupational hazards in the form of respiratory illness.

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