

Factors That Contribute to Noise Induced Hearing Loss Amongst Employees at the Platinum Mine in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Authors : Livhuwani Muthelo, R. N. Malema, T. M. Mothiba

Abstract : Long term exposure to excessive noise in the mining industry increases the risk of noise induced hearing loss, with consequences for employee's health, productivity and the overall quality of life. Objective: The objective of this study was to investigate the factors that contribute to Noise Induced Hearing Loss amongst employees at the Platinum mine in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. Study method: A qualitative, phenomenological, exploratory, descriptive, contextual design was applied in order to explore and describe the contributory factors. Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select 10 male employees who were diagnosed with NIHL in the year 2014 in four mine shafts, and 10 managers who were involved in a Hearing Conservation Programme. The data were collected using semi-structured one-on-one interviews. A qualitative data analysis of Tesch's approach was followed. Results: The following themes emerged: Experiences and challenges faced by employees in the work environment, hearing protective device factors and management and leadership factors. Hearing loss was caused by partial application of guidelines, policies, and procedures from the Department of Minerals and Energy. Conclusion: The study results indicate that although there are guidelines, policies, and procedures available, failure in the implementation of one element will affect the development and maintenance of employees hearing mechanism. It is recommended that the mine management should apply the guidelines, policies, and procedures and promptly repair the broken hearing protective devices.

Keywords : employees, factors, noise induced hearing loss, noise exposure

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