

NOISE POLLUTION IN KARACHI

Pages with reference to book, From 29 To 29

It is indeed heartening to see publication of a paper on Noise (JPMA March 1989) by Prof. S.H. Zaidi. Realization of the importance of noise and the bad effects it produces should be propagated much more widely. Until otologists and others in medical profession take keen interest on this subject, noise will go on increasing and producing the gross pathologies it is well known to do. Noise is increasing in the city. I started to highlight the bad effects it produces many years ago¹⁻³ but I am afraid the progress is really slow and there are well known reasons for it. I fully agree with the causes the author has pointed out as the source of noise. I will like to add that major source of noise which is affecting a large number of population in this city is industrial noise. This fact needs much more emphasis as it is the biggest cause of production of acoustic trauma or noise induced deafness. Every factory where there is machinery produces unwanted, unpleasant and undesirable sound, but the special culprits are textile industry, iron, steel and metal sheet industry. Imagine the plight of the people who in addition to the exposure to the noise in the city have to work 8-12 hours in a machinery producing noise upto 90-120 decibels. This is playing havoc with the ears of labour force³. The problem of workers exposed to noise is many-fold. These people and the labour unions are unaware of the fact that noise is damaging to health generally and to the ear particularly. Noise induced deafness, when it comes, is permanent⁴, and there is hardly any way of treating it except prevention and removing the patient from source of noise. Noise deafness is not recognised in Pakistan as a professional disease and this is rather sad as International Labour Organisation, the body which looks after the welfare of the labour force, do recognise it as industrial disease and it is time that this rule should also be applied to Pakistan, so that the industries take preventive measures to reduce noise and those who do not should pay compensation to workers who have become permanently deaf due to noise. At present no compensation is paid, neither any has been demanded, due to sheer ignorance.

An official survey of the level of noise in the industry is needed. We have tried to do such surveys from this department twice but have not been very successful due to non-cooperation of employers in the industry, who do not like any interference which may put them to further strain or expenses, thus administrators will not be cooperative until a rule is made to find out the high level of noise in the industry.

Department of ENT, K.V.S.S. Site Hospital, Manghopir Road, Karachi.
M.H.A. Beg

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