

**CHALLENGES IN EFFECTIVE REPORTING OF  
OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES OF MUNICIPAL  
COUNCIL WORKERS IN SRI LANKA**

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**(159170L)**

**Degree of Master of Science in  
Construction Law and Dispute Resolution**

**Department of Building Economics**

**University of Moratuwa  
Sri Lanka**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree**

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## DECLARATION

“I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The above candidate has carried out research for the master’s dissertation under my supervision.

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**This research dissertation is dedicated to my  
Wife, Daughter & Son.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Municipal Councils (MC) in Sri Lanka have hardly any occupational diseases (ODs) reporting system to trace the ODs among municipal council workers. For last several decades there has been no reported cases of occupational diseases (ODs). Therefore, need of mitigation, litigation or compensation had not arisen. When compared to the similar scenarios in the neighboring countries, occupational disease reporting system operated in municipal councils in Sri Lanka is exceptionally inactive. It is pretty clear that the occupational disease cases among MC workers were not reported not due to non-availability of OD patients. There should be an effective reporting system for the workers to get the benefit of it. Now the problem prevailing in the MCs is that, the MC is legally bound to comply with the Factories Ordinance of 1942, where occupational diseases as well as occupational accidents should be properly recorded and informed to the factories engineer, but the mechanism utilized to trace the potential patients of OD is not adequate to fulfil that objective. Only thing happened is the loss incurred due to occupational diseases is compensated by the other resources of the Municipal Councils.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has been encouraging the use of Electronic Health Records (EHR) which has created opportunities for keeping health records in an easily accessible mode for the benefit of the patient and for the public health surveillance. It is highly recommended to include the individual's occupation and industry into the standards of EHR. However, at this time, the EHR is continually evolving and the standards have not been finalized and established. As the collection of occupation and industry is not yet a standard in the EHR, this method of surveillance was not among the listed recommendations. However, should occupation and industry become standard variables captured in the EHR, this issue will be reviewed, and the opportunities and limitations provided by this data source will be explored fully for occupational disease surveillance.

**Key Words:** Occupational Diseases, Municipal Council workers, Solid Waste and Sewer Handlers, Screening, Reporting

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BLS: Bureau of Labour Statistics

CEC: Commission of European Countries

CMC: Colombo Municipal Council

EHR: Electronic Health Record

EU: European Union

Eurostat: Statistics agency of the European Union

GP: General Physician

ILO: International Labour Organization

MC: Municipal Councils

NIOSH: National Institute of Safety and Health

OD: Occupational Diseases

PHI: Public Health Inspector

SENSOR: Sentinel Event Notification System for Occupational Risks

WRA: Work Related Asthma

WRI: Work Related Illness

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