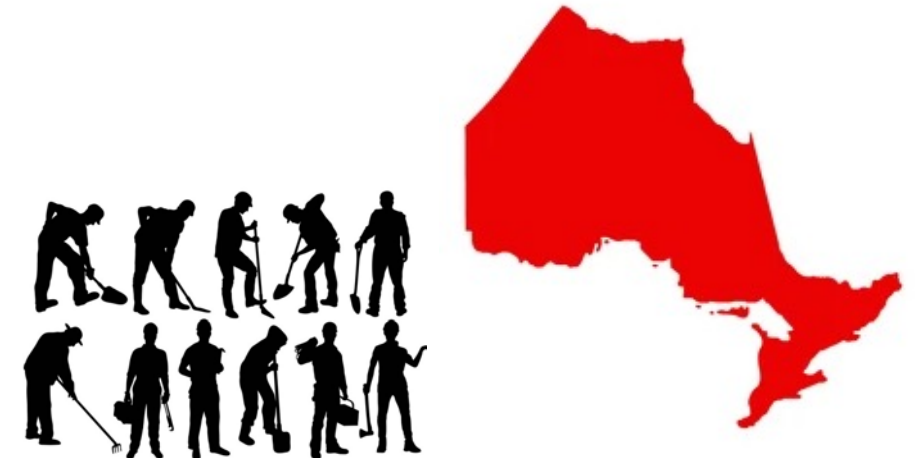


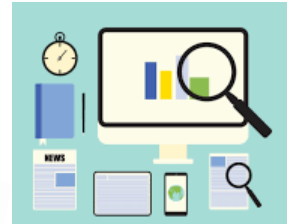
Heat Stress and Sun Safety among Ontario Migrant Agricultural Workers

Eduardo Huesca- Project Manager, Migrant Worker Projects
Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)



Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)

- Established in 1989 and funded through the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MLTSD). We are seven occupational health clinics located across the province.
- **Our mission is:** to protect workers and their communities from occupational disease, injuries and illnesses; to support their capacity to address occupational hazards; and to promote the social, mental and physical well-being of workers and their families.
- Staffed by an inter-disciplinary team, we provide occupational health information, services and supports: <https://www.ohcow.on.ca/>





OHCO's Migrant Worker Program Since 2006

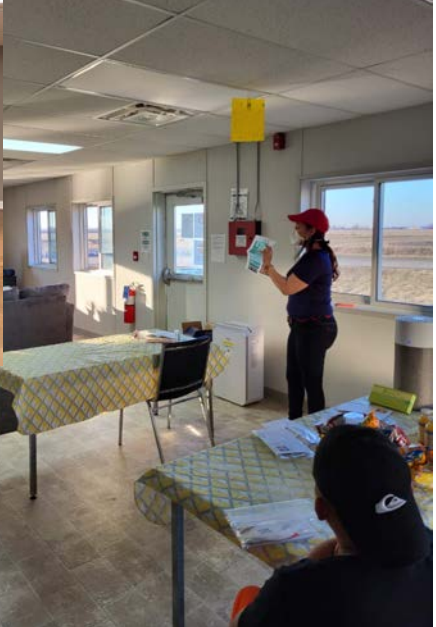
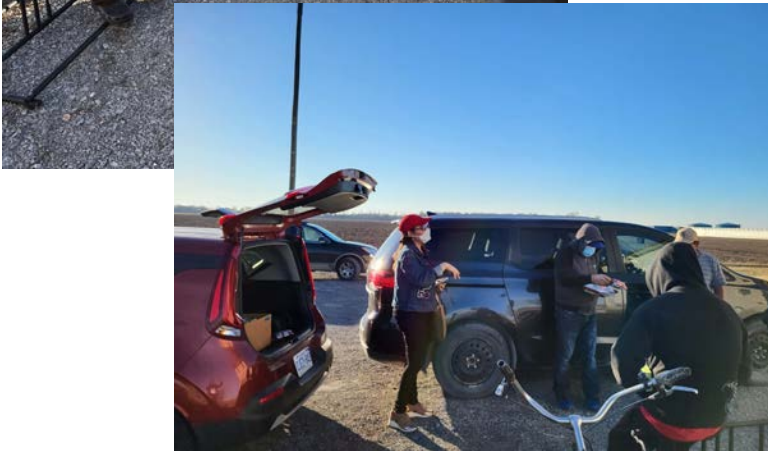




This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada. 

OHCOW-TNO/WSS Project

Worker Support Services (WSS)



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada.



Vulnerable Workers

“Vulnerable Workers” refer to workers with an elevated risk of occupational injury or illness

Systemic or structural imposed vulnerability not inherent to the person or worker group

OHS vulnerability in four areas: hazard exposure; workplace policies and procedures; worker awareness of hazards and OHS rights and responsibilities; and worker empowerment to participate in injury and illness prevention

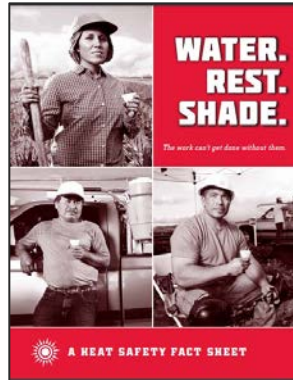
The OHS Vulnerability Measure, developed at the Institute for Work & Health (IWH), measures the extent to which a worker may be vulnerable to occupational health and safety (OHS) risks at work across the mentioned four areas

Using the measure, a worker is considered **most vulnerable to injury and illness when exposed to hazards in the workplace in combination with inadequate workplace policies and procedures, low OHS awareness and/or a workplace culture that discourages worker participation in injury and illness prevention.**

<https://www.iwh.on.ca/tools-and-guides/ohs-vulnerability-measure>



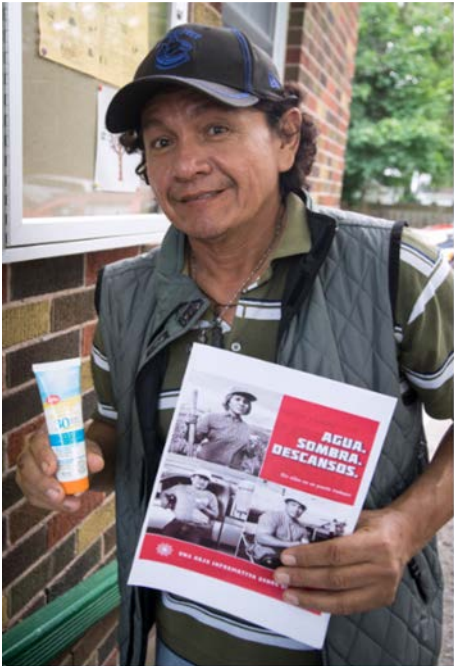
Heat Stress and Sun Safety among Ontario Migrant Agricultural Workers



Utilizing heat illness prevention materials developed by CAL OSHA and the National Center for Farmworker Health, from 2012-2014 we conducted 25 heat stress and sun safety workshops to a total of 500 Ontario migrant agricultural workers from Mexico and the Caribbean. All of these were outdoor workers.

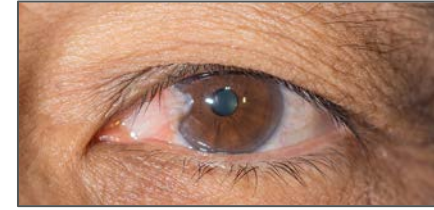
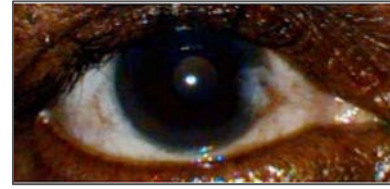
These workshops took place in the regions of Simcoe/Norfolk County, Niagara Region, Bradford and Durham Region, both on farms at the invitation of employers, or at the community level at regional events and health and information fairs.

2012-2014 Heat Stress and Sun Safety Workshop Findings



- The majority of workers had not received prior training or information regarding heat stress or sun safety.
- Most workers identified that they did not know what to do in the case of a heat stroke emergency.
- The majority of workers noted they were able to access enough drinking water during work time.
- A number of workers noted that they had experienced sun burn while working in Ontario. They described sunburns to the back of their neck, face, and arms.
- Workers noted that they did not feel comfortable asking to take breaks outside of their allocated break times in cases where they felt the heat and sun was negatively affecting them.
- The majority of workers noted that there was no easily accessible shade near to where they work to avoid the sun during breaks.
- Most workers noted that on particularly hot days supervisors would organize work during the cooler periods of the day, and stop work when temperatures were considered too hot.

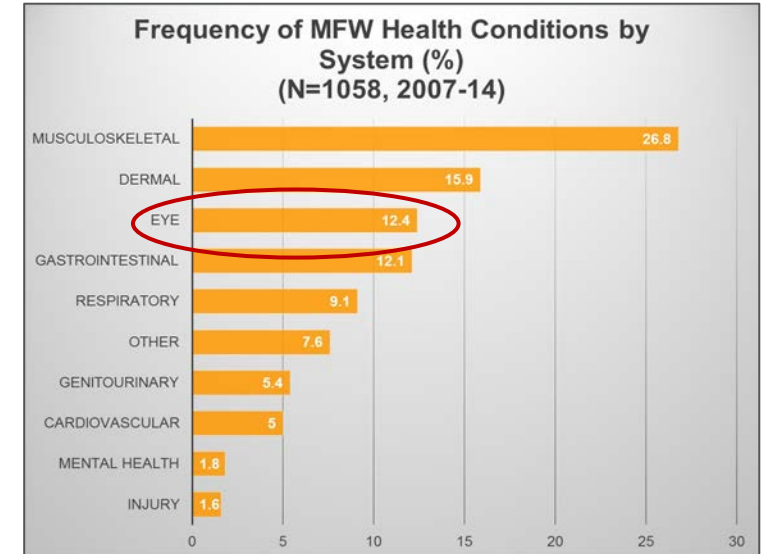
Pterygium / Carnosidad



- An abnormal growth of tissue on the clear membrane that covers the white of the eye (the conjunctiva) and the clear front surface of the eye (adjacent cornea)
- usually not a serious condition, but it can cause uncomfortable symptoms (burning, itchiness, gritty feeling, redness, feeling of having something in your eye)
- Severe growth can affect vision
- It can grow over a period of months to years

Causes & risk factors

- Most common among those in tropic regions
- Associated with chronic sun (ultraviolet [UV]) exposure
- Dry eyes
- Irritated eyes (dust and wind)



Common among agricultural workers
(Latinx and Caribbean)



Occupational Health Clinics
for Ontario Workers Inc.

Centres de santé des
travailleurs (ses) de l'Ontario Inc.

Current Work: Heat Stress Infographic Distribution



Heat Stress – A Serious Hazard for Outdoor Workers
(English, Spanish, Thai, Tagalog)

<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/posts/heat-stress-outdoor-workers/>



Heat Stress – A Year Round Concern in Greenhouses
(English, Spanish, Thai, Tagalog)

<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/posts/heat-stress-greenhouses/>

Current Work:

Supporting Workers in Measuring Heat and Humidity in their Bunkhouses

July 2023 Worker Case:

Coordinated by Cynthia Mora and Daisy Rivadeneira (OHCOW)

Migrant agricultural workers concerned with high temperatures in their bunkhouse

- Concerns not addressed by employer (told workers to open windows and doors)
- Contacted public health, who identified that there are no max temperature regulations on worker housing
- MLITSD does not recognize worker housing as part of the workplace, although WSIB does.

Provided workers with Aranet4 air quality monitor: Measures CO2, temperature and Humidity



Three days of readings

31.9C, 74% humidity, humidex 46
29.9C, 69% humidity, humidex 40
33.9C, 62% humidity, humidex 47

In talks to expand this work in collaboration with the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA)

Considerations:

MLITSD's Heat Standard Consultations

- Requirement and enforcement on worker training and availability of prevention resources
- Covering worker housing as an extension of the workplace, setting standards and enforcement
- We cannot let agriculture continue to be left behind

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Requiring Cleaner Washrooms on Construction Sites

Changes will require women's-only washrooms and make the skilled trades more accessible for everyone

March 15, 2023

[Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development](#)

[Women's Social and Economic Opportunity](#)

Thank you

Questions or comments?