

Some occupational health hazards and effects on fire-fighters of the Colombo Municipal Council.

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One hundred fire-fighters were selected by first stratifying according to the duration of service and then randomly selecting proportionate numbers from each category. Controls were group matched for age and smoking habits. The study consisted of a questionnaire on respiratory symptoms, concurrent diseases, symptoms and habits, a clinical examination and ventilator capacity measurement's modified harvard step test and electrocardiography for those over 40 years of age was also carried out. A high percent (76 percent) of fire-fighters suffer from acute respiratory symptoms, the most prevalent ones being runny nose and cough. Those who use face masks had a lower prevalence of burning sensation and dryness of throat, or difficulty in breathing which was statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). The measured ventilator capacities were within the normal range of predicated value under the percent predicated method. However, with increasing age and /or duration of service the differences between the predicated and measured values appear to increase. The same trend is seen with the FEVI/FVC percent. The percent predicted method does not appear to be a method sensitive to such changes.