IARC Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans. Volume 62. Wood Dust and Formaldehyde. - International Agency for Research on Cancer, Lyon 1995, 405 pp. Sw. F. 80.00. ISBN 92 832 1262.2

Forests cover about one-third of the globe's total land area, about 3.4 million km^2. About 3.5 thousand million m^3 of tree biomass is harvested, about half of which is used as fuel, the rest as sawn wood, pulpwood, *etc.* The first monograph of this IARC Volume reviews the carcinogenic and genetic risks to humans in industries and occupations in which exposure to wood dust may occur. Readers of Biologia Plantarum may find interesting the brief summary of the anatomical features of wood and a detailed description of the chemical composition of softwood and hardwood. This section is followed by a description of the exposure to wood dust in the workplace and on the evaluation of epidemiological studies of cancer in workers exposed to wood dust. The monograph concludes that occupational exposure to wood dust is causally related to adenocarcinoma of the nasal cavities. The second monograph evaluates the carcinogenic and genotoxic effects of formaldehyde, as this compound is used during furniture and cabinet-making. Chemical and physical data together with data on production, use, occurrence, and occupational exposure, and data relevant for the evaluation of carcinogenicity are presented. Formaldehyde induced mutation and DNA damage in bacteria and mutation, gene conversion, DNA strand breaks in fungi. The effects of formaldehyde were evaluated in previous IARC Monographs (1982, 1987), but justification for their re-evaluation is that a substantial body of new data has become available. Formaldehyde was classified as probably carcinogenic to humans.

The publication is appendixed by a Summary table of genetic and related effects and Activity profiles for genetic and related effects. The publication is available through the network of WHO Sales agents.

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