

PREFACE

This monograph summarizes the current research on the epidemiology and prevention of occupational cancer in Europe. Eleven peer-reviewed articles offer a composite view of the current status and future perspectives of this discipline at a time of major economic and political changes in Europe.

The monograph includes a brief history of occupational cancer research in Europe and the current burden of cancer from occupational exposure. A large portion of the monograph is devoted to reviews of occupational cancer in various European countries or groups of countries. The first two reviews describe those regions with the strongest tradition of research in the field: the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom. These countries are characterized by high-quality cancer registries and routinely collected information on occupation, e.g., on the occasion of censuses, allowing record linkage studies. Four articles address the situation in the remaining large Western European countries—France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Although these countries have a strong tradition in occupational health research, with the possible exception of Spain, their epidemiologic research dates back only to the 1970s and 1980s; in recent years, however, research on occupational cancer has expanded considerably. The last two articles of the geographic overview describe the occupational

cancer research in the Central European countries and the European territories of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The authors of these two articles critically review the available data on occupational cancer from former Socialist countries and provide reliable information on the extent and amount of occupational exposure to carcinogens. The two final articles of the monograph address specific thematic issues: the importance of asbestos as an occupational carcinogen in Europe and the use of routinely collected data to investigate occupational cancer in women, based on the experience in England and Wales.

Despite the heterogeneity of these articles, which reflects to a large extent the differences in quality and completeness of the available data on occupational cancer, they represent an original attempt to provide a systematic overview of occupational cancer research in Europe.

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