Abstract

The nature of work and the hazards associated with it continue to evolve as both technology and globalization progress. Economic and sociopolitical forces drive change in the distribution of risks and lead to relative improvements for some and decrements for others. The dilemma is that as known risk factors associated with work are often passed on to less developed regions, improvements in other risk factors there are realized. The history of occupational health is intimately tied with the labor movement and the battle for more equitable distributions of wealth and health. This battle between industry and workers spills over into the science needed to make informed regulatory decisions about risk and its management. Some case studies from the current Occupational Safety and Health Administration director are informative and will be presented.