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Service (sector) Trauma - Emergency and Trauma Section N° CEP

### **Superficial Corneal Foreign Body as Work-related Injury**

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**Purpose:** To evaluate the epidemiology of superficial corneal foreign body (SCFB). **Methods:** Patients who were seen at the Ocular Emergency and Trauma section of the Department of Ophthalmology, Federal University of São Paulo, from April/05 to June/05, were screened and those with SCFB were interviewed. Data regarding gender, age, occupation, employment status, use of protective devices (mask or glasses), availability of ocular protective devices, and supervision of its use were collected. Awareness of the possible complications was assessed with the patient's opinion on the worst outcome of this type of injury. Differences in proportions were analyzed with Yates-corrected Chi-square or Fisher exact test when appropriate. **Results:** One hundred twenty-three patients were interviewed. Only 3 patients were female and the mean age was 36 years (SD 10). Most injuries occurred at the workplace (86.2%), and 58.4% of the patients did not have a legal employment registration. The occupational activities most frequently reported were construction related activities (44.3%) and welding/soldering (11.3%). Half of the patients (51%) reported a similar previous accident. In most workplaces (79.8%) protective devices were available and 85.3% of the patients were instructed to use them. A safety protection was being used at the time of the accident in 34.2% of the cases. Use of protective devices was more frequent among patients that had legal employment registry ( $p= 0.008$ ) and among those under supervision ( $p= 0.0415$ ). The majority of the patients (68.9%) were aware of severe complications.

**Conclusions:** Most patients with SCFB are aware of its severe complications and injuries usually occur in places where safety devices are available and often during its use. Prevention should focus on supervision and correct use of safety devices