NIOSH SPIROMETRY TRAINING GUIDE

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Prepared by

UNIVERSITIES OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

Division of Consumer Health Education
Department of Environmental and Community Medicine
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

and

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
Division of Respiratory Disease Studies
Surveillance Branch
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505

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The Universities Occupational Safety and Health Educational Resource Center (UOSHERC) is one of sixteen Educational Resource Centers (ERCs) - now called Education Research Centers - located at universities throughout the United States. The ERCs, which were first established in 1977 in response to the OSHAct, receive sponsorship from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to provide undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education for occupational safety and health professionals. Educational programs are primarily designed to meet the needs of occupational health physicians, occupational health nurses, industrial hygienists, safety professionals, and those professionals in related disciplines.

UOSHERC served New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. UOSHERC was a consortium composed of the following educational institutions and programs:

- Hunter College School of Health Sciences
- Graduate Industrial Hygiene Program
- The Mount Sinai School of Medicine
- Occupational Medicine Program
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Safety Engineering Program
- New York University Medical Center
- Graduate Occupational Hygiene Program
- University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
- Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
- Continuing Educational and Outreach Program
- Occupational Medicine Program
- School of Health Related Professions
- Occupational Health Nursing Program
NIOSH SPIROMETRY TRAINING GUIDE
CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER .................................................................................................................................. iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................................ v

PROJECT FACULTY AND STAFF ................................................................................................ vi

NOTICE TO ALL COURSE ATTENDEES ................................................................................ viii

INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 0-1

COURSE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES ........................................................................................... 0-2

UNIT ONE: OVERVIEW OF PULMONARY ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY ................ 1-1
  A. The Respiratory System ........................................................................................................ 1-1
  B. Mechanics of Respiration .................................................................................................. 1-3
  C. Mechanisms for Protecting the Lungs against Airborne Hazards .................................... 1-7
  D. Smoking and Occupational Lung Disease ...................................................................... 1-8
  E. Occupational Lung Diseases ............................................................................................. 1-9

UNIT TWO: OVERVIEW OF SPIROMETRY ........................................................................ 2-1
  A. Definition of Spirometry .................................................................................................... 2-1
  B. Types of Spirometers ......................................................................................................... 2-1
  C. Important Measures of Ventilatory Performance ............................................................. 2-5
  D. Limitations of Spirometry ................................................................................................. 2-11
  E. Accuracy and Precision ..................................................................................................... 2-12

UNIT THREE: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM ...................................................... 3-1
  A. Components of a good spirometry QA program ............................................................... 3-1
  B. Calibration checks and other equipment quality control measures .................................. 3-4
  C. Infection Control ................................................................................................................ 3-6

UNIT FOUR: SPIROMETRIC TECHNIQUE .......................................................................... 4-1
  A. Prepare the Equipment ....................................................................................................... 4-1
  B. Prepare the Subject ............................................................................................................ 4-2
  C. Position the Subject ........................................................................................................... 4-3
  D. Perform the Test ............................................................................................................... 4-4
  E. Check the Acceptability and Reproducibility of the Maneuver ...................................... 4-6
  F. Retest as Needed ............................................................................................................... 4-9
  G. Record Keeping .................................................................................................................. 4-9
  H. Sample Tracings ............................................................................................................... 4-10

UNIT FIVE: BASIC SPIROMETRIC CALCULATIONS ....................................................... 5-1
  A. Forced Vital Capacity (FVC) ............................................................................................ 5-1

NIOSH SPIROMETRY TRAINING GUIDE i
APPENDIX J. METRIC CONVERSIONS

APPENDIX K. OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN CALCULATING BTPS

APPENDIX L. TABLES OF PREDICTED VALUES

APPENDIX M. TABLES OF OBSTACULAR/RESTRICTIVE PATTERNS

REFERENCES
DISCLAIMER

The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) or the Universities Occupational Safety and Health Educational Resource Center (UOSHERC), nor does mention of company names or products constitute endorsement by NIOSH, UMDNJ or UOSHERC.

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The original draft version of this manual was completed in 1991 under the direction of Dr. Audrey R. Gotsch, Director, Continuing Education and Outreach Program, UOSHERC and Associate Professor of Environmental and Community Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. In 1994, the American Thoracic Society updated their spirometry recommendations. The manual was updated in 1997 by Dr. John Hankinson to reflect the changes in the ATS 1994 spirometry recommendations. This version was edited and updated by Dr. Lu-Ann Beeckman-Wagner to expand the quality control procedures and to reflect new spirometry reference equations.
PROJECT FACULTY AND STAFF

The NIOSH Spirometry Training Guide was prepared by:

UNIVERSITIES OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER (UOSHERC)

Philip J. Landrigan, MD, MSc, Center Director
Chairman, Department of Community Medicine
Director, Division of Environmental Medicine
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

UOSHERC Continuing Education and Outreach Program
Division of Consumer Health Education
Department of
Environmental and Community Medicine
UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Audrey R. Gotsch, DrPH, CHES
Program Director, Associate Professor
Chief, Division of Consumer Health Education

Lee Laustsen, BA, Deputy Director
Deborah K. Shields, MPH, CHES
Curriculum Writer
Doris Daneluk, BS, Course Coordinator
Mitchel Rosen, MS, Course Coordinator

Course Instructors
Alan G. Backman, AS, CRTT, RCPT
Janice Blaer Close, BS, RRT
Robert J. Close, BS, RRT
Mark Eisenstock, BS, RCPT
Vincent Scoles, III, BS, RCPT, RPFT
UOSHERC Occupational Medicine Program
Division of Occupational Health
Department of Environmental and Community Medicine
UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Michael Gochfeld, MD, PhD, Program Director
Clinical Professor, Chief, Division of Occupational Health
Spirometry Course Director and Contributing Editor for the Guide

Gail Buckler, RN, MPH, Clinical Instructor

Howard Kipen, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor
Medical Director, Environmental and Occupational Health Clinical Center

NIOSH Consultant and Editor
John L. Hankinson, PhD
Hankinson Consulting, Inc.

Original NIOSH Project Officer
Bernadine B. Kuchinski, RN, PhD
Nurse Director
Office of Extramural Coordination and Special Projects

NIOSH Project Officer
Lu-Ann F. Beeckman-Wagner, PhD
Surveillance Branch
Division of Respiratory Disease Studies
NOTICE TO ALL COURSE ATTENDEES:

Section (h) (1) (iii) of the Cotton Dust Standard (29 CFR 1910.43) promulgated by OSHA in 1978 and amended December 13, 1985 states: "Persons other than licensed physicians, who administer the pulmonary function testing required by this section shall have completed a NIOSH-approved training course in spirometry."

Within NIOSH, the responsibility of approving courses had been delegated to the Division of Training and Manpower Development but currently resides in the Division of Respiratory Disease Studies. Minimum requirements for approval of a course are contained in Appendix D of the Standard and include criteria for apparatus, technique, interpretation, course content and hours of instruction. In addition, NIOSH has established criteria for staff qualifications and course format.

When NIOSH approves a course, it is attesting to the fact that the course meets the minimum OSHA/NIOSH criteria for teaching individuals to perform spirometry in the Cotton Dust Industry. This does not mean that the individual taking the course is certified as a pulmonary function technician by NIOSH. Students have merely completed a NIOSH-approved course. The Standard does not require the completion of a second/update course nor is there a requirement that an update course must be taken to complete the first course approved by NIOSH.
INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND: The NIOSH Spirometry Training Guide is based on two earlier publications, the NIOSH Spirometry Workbook and the NIOSH Manual of Spirometry in Occupational Medicine. In the new curriculum, the material covered in the NIOSH Manual of Spirometry in Occupational Medicine has been simplified and incorporated into the content of the NIOSH Spirometry Workbook. New material has also been added, including a comparison of volume and flow spirometers and volume/time and flow/volume tracings, quality assurance procedures, occupational lung diseases and hazards, and information from the American Thoracic Society Standardization of Spirometry--1994 Update (1).

The American Thoracic Society is the medical section of the American Lung Association. It has provided a leading thrust in the standardization and upgrading of spirometric instruments and practices. Its first set of standards, ATS Statement--Snowbird Workshop on Standardization of Spirometry was essentially incorporated by OSHA in the Cotton Dust Standard, which was promulgated on June 23, 1978. The Snowbird Workshop standards were revised in 1987 (2), and again in 1994, and released as the ATS Standardization of Spirometry--1994 Update (1).

PURPOSE: The NIOSH Spirometry Training Guide was prepared for use as an adjunct or supplement to a NIOSH approved course on spirometry. It is not intended to serve as a self-instructional package. Learning spirometry requires observation, demonstration, and hands-on practice.

INTENDED AUDIENCE: This Guide is intended for individuals who are responsible for conducting spirometry in the workplace. It will be of special interest to occupational health physicians, nurses, and other health professionals.

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COURSE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Goal: The goal of this course is to increase the number of spirometry technicians who:

1. Use standardized methods to obtain acceptable and reproducible spirograms.
2. Correctly perform calculations for basic spirometric parameters.
3. Implement appropriate quality assurance procedures for spirometric equipment.
4. Recognize the applications, strengths, and limitations of spirometry in the occupational health setting.

Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

Unit One: Overview of Pulmonary Anatomy and Physiology

Briefly describe:

a. The function of the respiratory system and the mechanics of respiration.
b. Mechanisms within the respiratory system to protect the lungs from airborne hazards.
c. Obstructive and restrictive lung diseases.

Unit Two: Overview of Spirometry

Briefly describe:

a. Common spirometric terms.
b. Volume and flow spirometers.
c. Volume/time and flow/volume tracings.
d. Forced Expiratory Maneuver, Forced Vital Capacity (FVC), and Forced Expiratory Volume at One Second (FEV₁).
e. The role of spirometry in evaluating pulmonary function and detecting occupational lung diseases.
f. The limitations of spirometry as a screening tool.
g. The importance of accuracy and precision in spirometry.

Unit Three: Quality Assurance Procedures

Perform spirometric equipment quality assurance procedures:

a. Calibrate volume for volume and flow spirometers.
b. Check that the mechanical recorder is working properly.
c. Verify the accuracy of the ambient temperature reading.
d. Inspect that the start of the test begins at the right time and at the right place on the graph paper.
e. Check that the electronically-derived FEV₁ is calculated using the back extrapolation method.

f. Verify that the electronically-derived predicted normal values are calculated correctly.

g. Maintain spirometer records and calibration and maintenance logs.

h. Perform infection control procedures appropriate for the type of spirometer used.

Unit Four: Spirometric Technique

a. Properly prepare equipment prior to testing.

b. Identify suitable subjects and criteria for postponing the test.

c. Prepare subjects to perform the test.

d. Perform the test correctly.

e. Determine the acceptability of spirometers obtained.

f. Determine the reason(s) why the subject is having difficulty in completing a satisfactory test and make appropriate coaching changes as needed for retesting.

g. Obtain at least two spirometers that are reproducible from at least three that are acceptable.

h. Maintain subject records that include date/time, age, height, sex, race, testing position used, ambient air temperature, barometric pressure, spirometer used, tests performed, test results, predicted normal values used, and comment on subject cooperation and effort.

Unit Five: Basic Spirometric Calculations

Correctly calculate the basic measures used for interpreting test results:

a. Forced Vital Capacity (FVC) and variability between the two largest FVCs.

b. Forced Expiratory Volume in One Second (FEV₁) and variability between the two largest FEV₁s.

c. Back extrapolation and extrapolated volume.

d. FEV₁/FVC%.

e. Forced Mid-Expiratory Flow Rate (FEF₂₅₋₇₅%) (optional measurement).

f. Conversion to BTPS.

Unit Six: Comparing Observed to Predicted Normal Values

a. Select predicted normal value tables that are appropriate for the subjects and the employment setting.

b. Use the same set of predicted values for all spirometric calculations and for future comparisons.

c. Determine subjects' predicted normal values and calculate the subjects' percentage of the predicted values.

d. List factors that affect normal predicted values (e.g., age, sex, height, race).

e. Calculate the race correction factor for appropriate ethnic categories and occupational settings.

Unit Seven: Comparing Changes in Follow-Up Spirograms
a. Determine subjects' absolute change and percent change in follow-up spirograms.
b. Identify common non-pathological factors that potentially affect changes in follow-up spirograms (e.g., age, height, season, time of day, etc.).

Unit Eight: Overview of Standards for Spirometric Equipment


Unit Nine: Additional Exercises

a. Successfully complete the exercises.