

FUNCTIONAL RESPIRATORY EXPLORATION IN PNEUMOCONIOSIS

Villena, M., E. Vargas, R. Soria

Instituto Boliviano de Biología de Altura. Department of Physiology, Biology, and Altitude Pathology. Laboratory of Respiratory Physiology.

We present the results of functional respiratory exploration in two series of patients with silicosis arising from ten mines situated at high altitude.

The objective of this study is to show the importance of a complete functional respiratory evaluation in silicosis for the assessment of labor-related injury.

We studied 91 patients (series A: n=74, series B: n=17). In addition to clinical-radiological exams, other measurements were taken: pulmonary volume and capacities (spirometer), pulmonary compliance (intraesophageal balloon method), arterial gases (direct puncture), in both resting and exercising states. In series B, the alveolar-capillary diffusion (DLCO, CO method) was also measured.

The most outstanding results in both series

show hypoxia with desaturation accentuated during exercise. In series B, the DLCO was found diminished. The radiological-functional correlation with values obtained during exercise is more evident than when obtained with functional values at rest.

In conclusion, the functional respiratory evaluation in patients with silicosis in our average should appeal to the major quantity of exams that permit certainty in the appraisal and should consider the altitude from which the patients come. Isolated radiological analysis has only diagnostic value, and in no case can serve as a functional evaluation.

With the technical participation of Alarcón A. M. and Gonzales C.

