Health Consequences of Overexposure to Respirable Coal and Silica Dust

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Acknowledge colleagues at DRDS

- Anita Wolfe - Public Health Advisor
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Presentation Outline

- Lung diseases in coal mining
- Magnitude of impact on coal mining industry
- Regional “Hotspot” findings
- Best Practices efforts of NIOSH
- Black Lung Video

Respirable dust in coal mining

- Dust less than 10 microns in size (cannot be seen with the eye)
- Overexposure can cause lung disease
- X-ray surveillance program available for underground coal miners
- Current exposures limits established in U.S. in 1969
- Personal sampling conducted by MSHA and mine operators on a periodic basis
- Control technologies developed and utilized to reduce worker exposures

Diseases caused by inhalation of coal mine dust

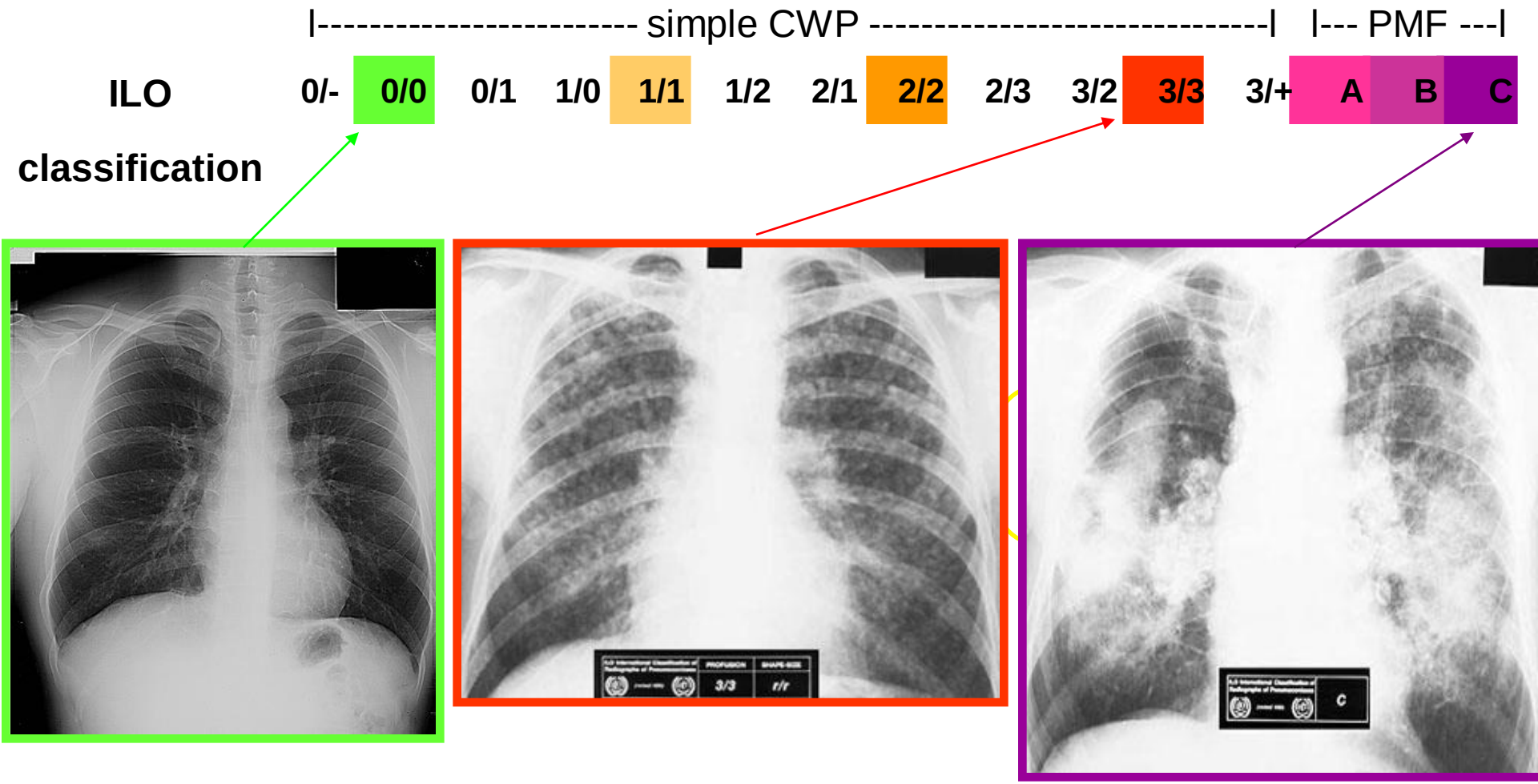
- Fibrotic diseases – damage/destroy lung tissue
  - Coal workers' pneumoconiosis "CWP"
  - Silicosis
- Airflow diseases "COPD" – block movement of air in and out of lungs
  - Bronchitis
  - Emphysema
  - Mineral dust airway disease

Fibrotic lung diseases in miners

CWP and silicosis

- Similar patterns on chest x-ray
- Simple and Complicated forms of disease
- Complicated = Progressive Massive Fibrosis (PMF)
- Smoking does not cause these diseases
- ILO standards used to determine severity
- **Cannot be cured, so prevention is the key**

International Labour Office Classification of Radiographs



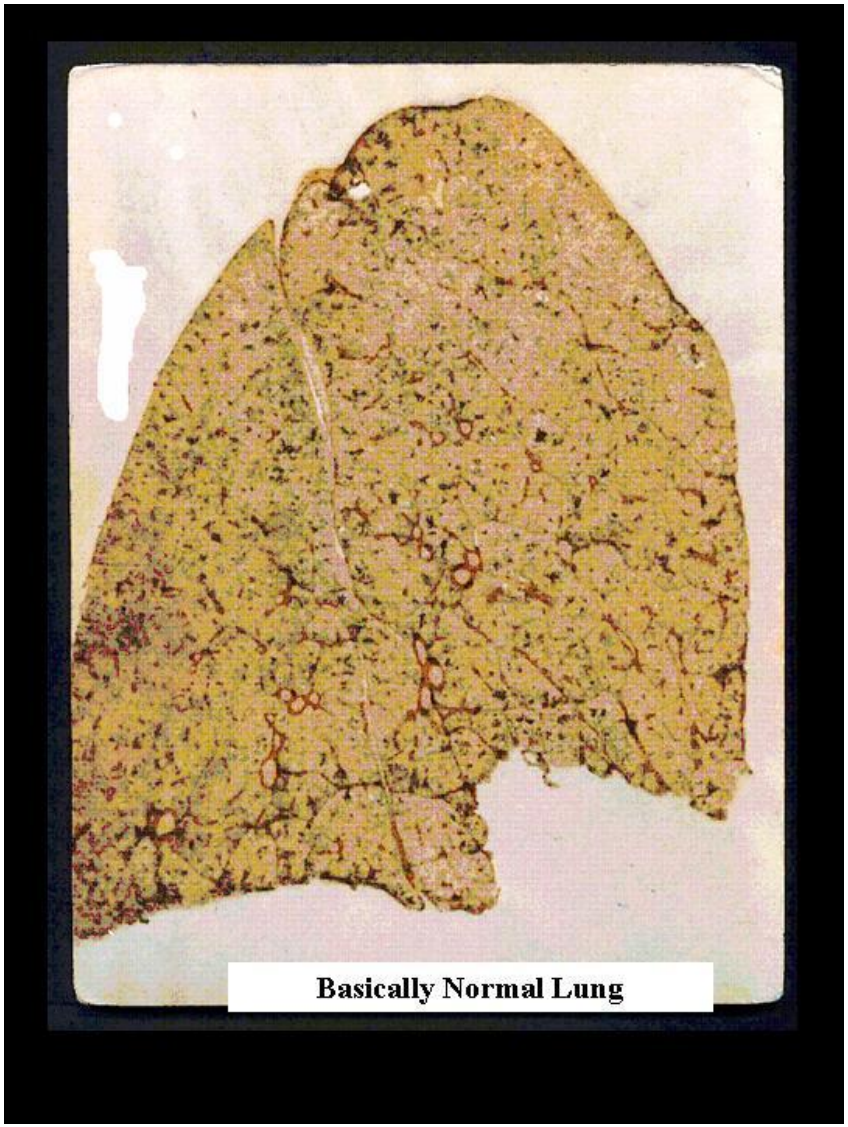
Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis (CWP)

- Commonly called Black Lung Disease
- Chronic lung disease resulting from inhalation of respirable coal dust
- Dust deposits in the lung and damages lung tissue
- Disease development typically takes over 10 years of dust exposure

Simple CWP

- Initially worker may not have any symptoms
- As disease progresses, symptoms appear
  - Coughing
  - Wheezing
  - Shortness of breath (especially during exercise)
- Disease can advance to PMF

Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis



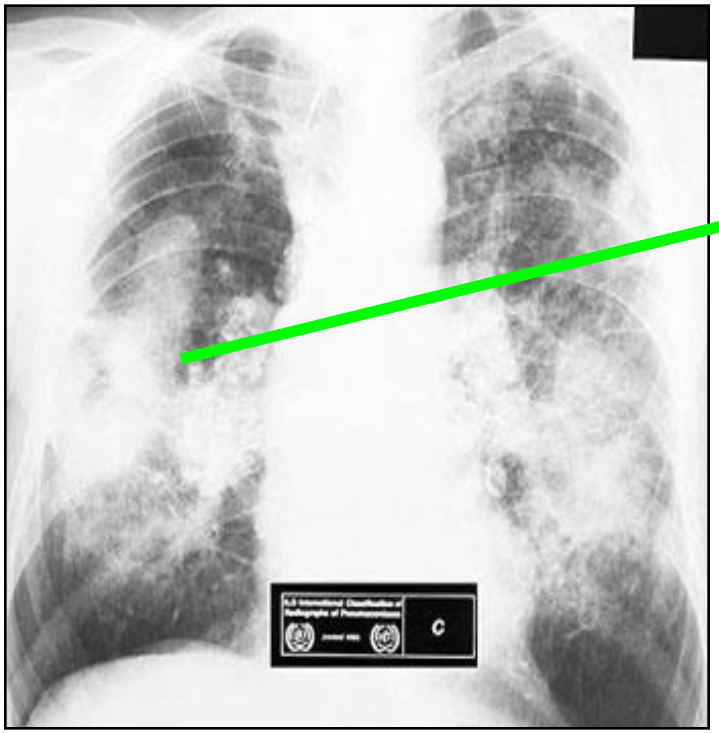
Basically Normal Lung

Coal Worker
Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis
(CWP)
Black Lung Disease

Complicated CWP

- Progressive Massive Fibrosis (PMF)
- Fibrous tissue develops in lungs
- Lungs become stiff and cannot expand fully
- Breathing becomes difficult
- Lips and fingernails may have bluish tinge
- Fluid retention and signs of heart failure

Complicated CWP
(Progressive Massive Fibrosis)



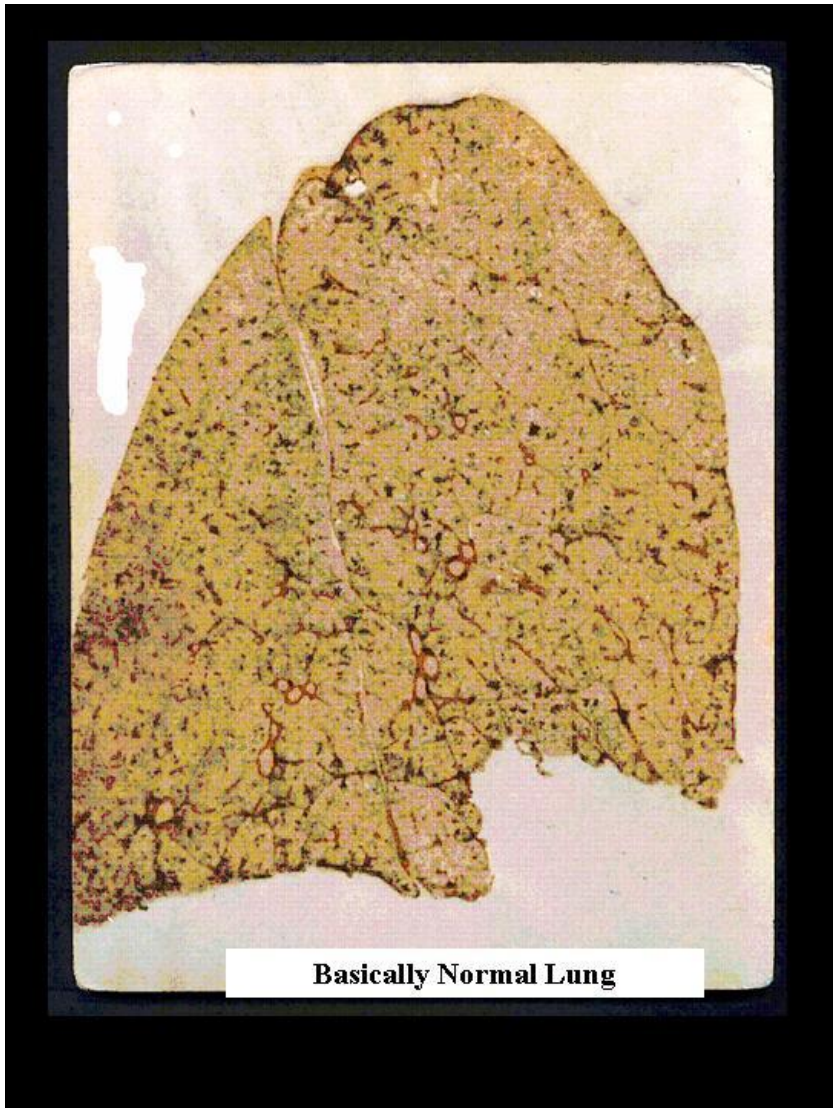
Exposure to respirable crystalline silica

- Silica is 20 times more toxic than coal
- Freshly fractured silica more toxic than aged silica
- Smaller particles are more toxic
- Consequences of overexposure:
  - Silicosis
  - Airways diseases
  - Pulmonary tuberculosis
  - Chronic renal disease
  - Lung cancer

Silicosis

- Chronic
  - Occurs after 10 or more years of exposure
  - Swelling in lungs
  - Troubled breathing similar to COPD
- Accelerated
  - Develops in 5 to 10 years
  - Symptoms occur faster than in chronic silicosis
- Acute
  - Develops in less than 5 years
  - Lungs become inflamed and fill with fluid
  - Severe shortness of breath and low blood oxygen

Silicosis

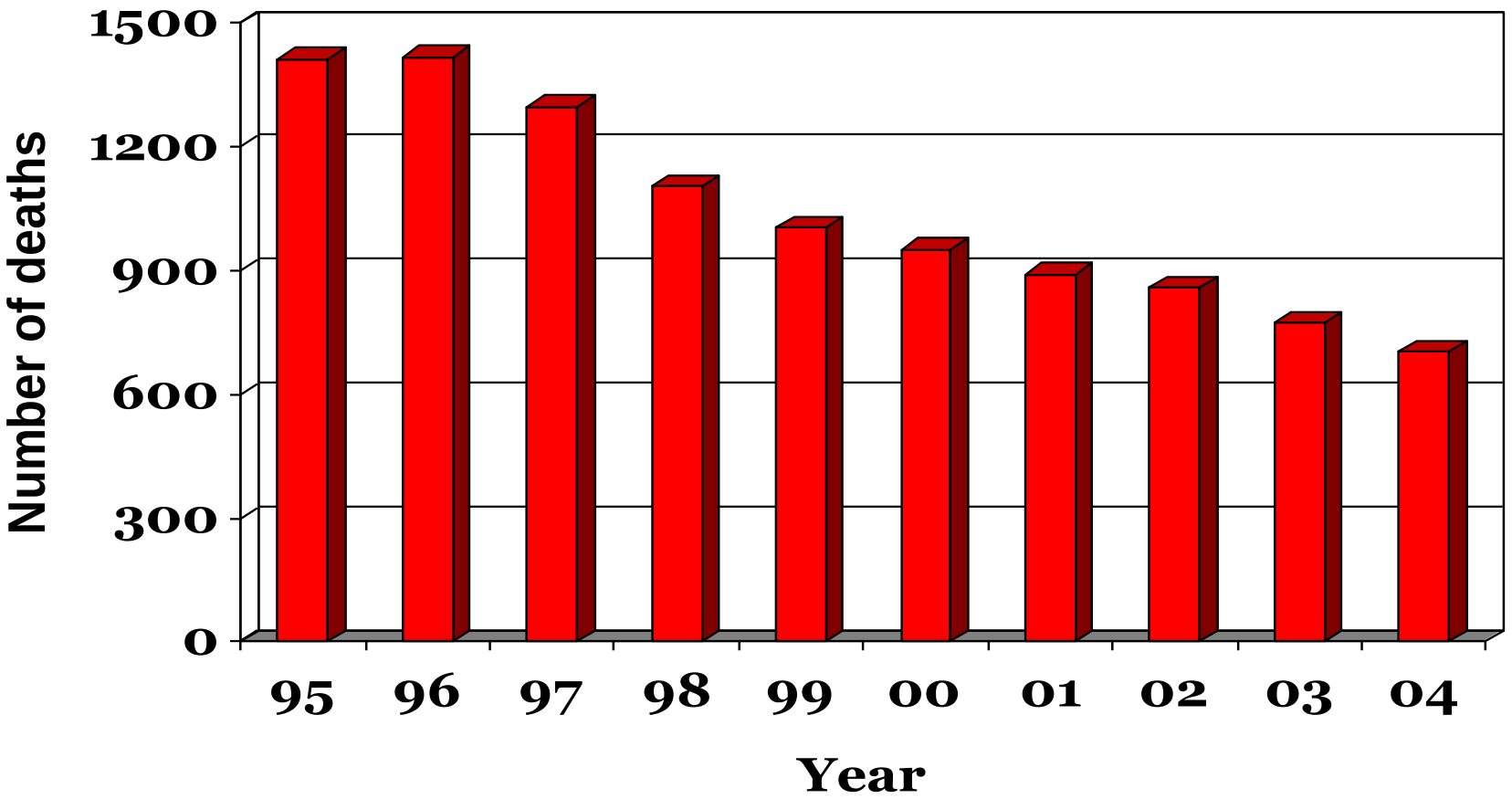

Basically Normal Lung


Section of Freeze-Dried Human Lung
Silicosis

Treatment of lung disease in coal miners

- No medication can reverse dust damage
- Treatment directed at reducing symptoms and prevention of complications
  - Vaccines against flu and pneumonia
  - Antibiotics for infections and congestion
  - Bronchodilators for airway spasm
  - Oxygen supplementation
  - Treatment for heart failure
- Lung/heart transplant as last resort

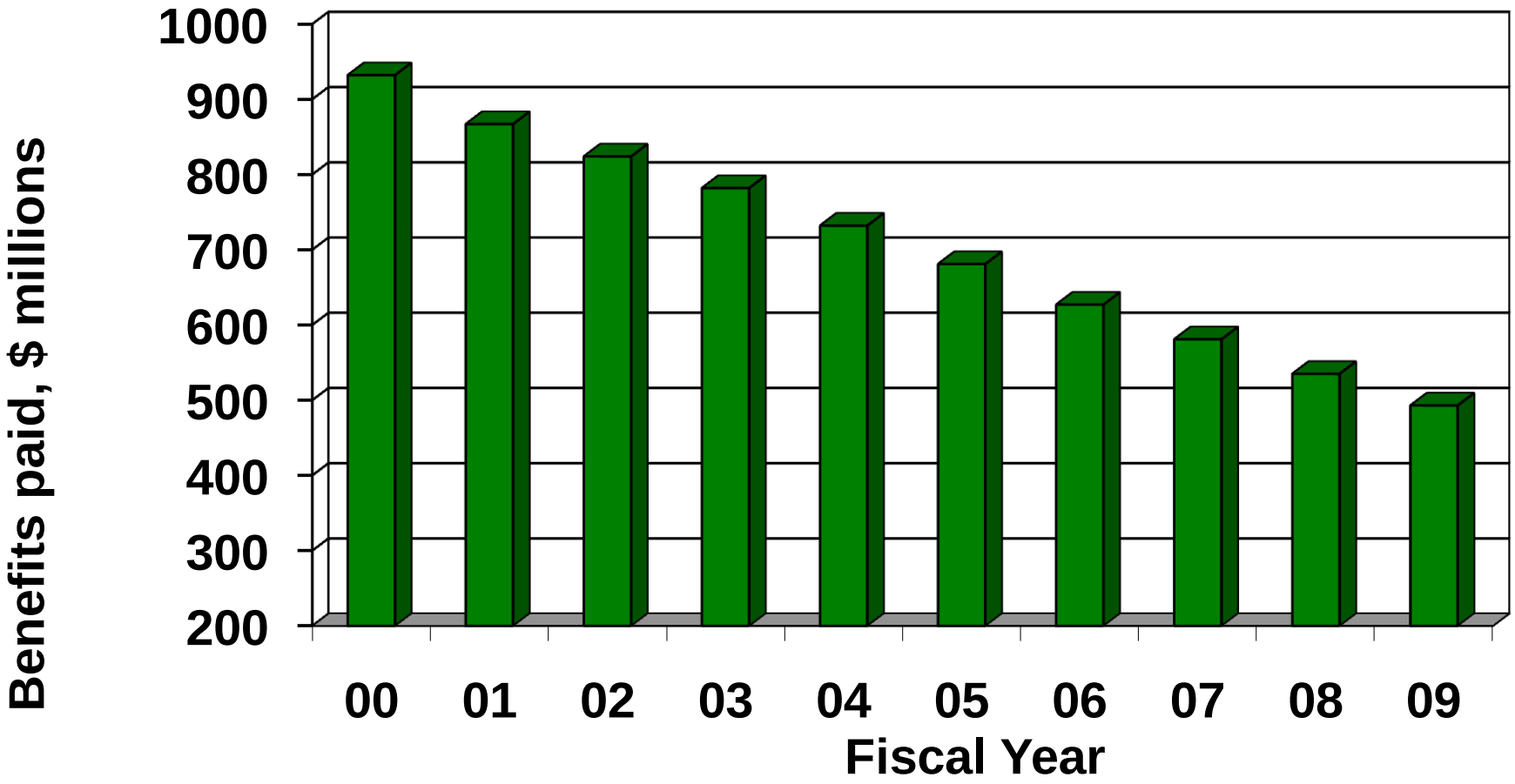
Coal miner deaths with CWP as direct or contributing cause



(total deaths from 1970 – 2004 = 69,377)

Total paid from the Federal Black Lung Benefits Program

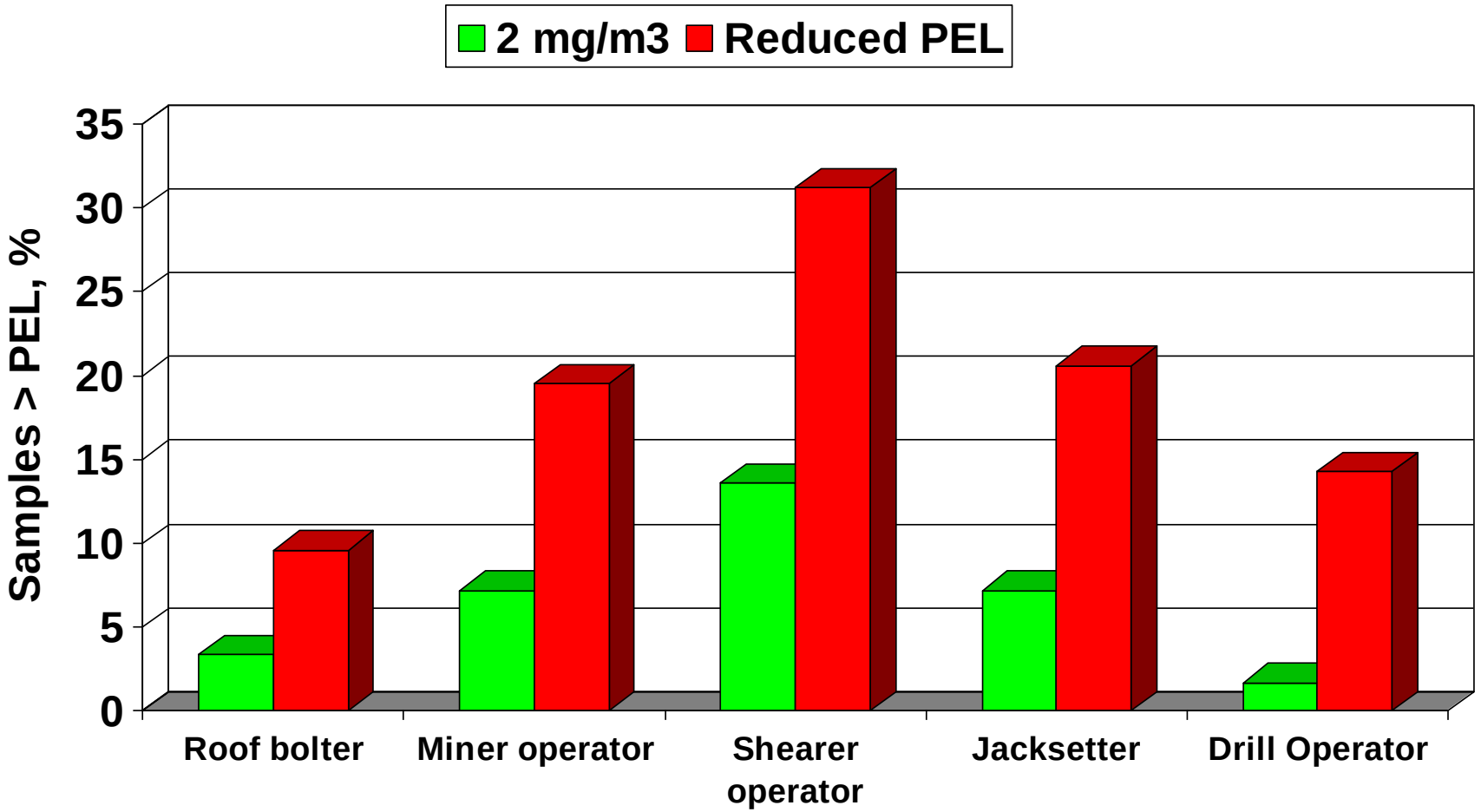
(Total of payments from SSA and DOL)



(total paid from 1970 – 2009 = $44.2 Billion)

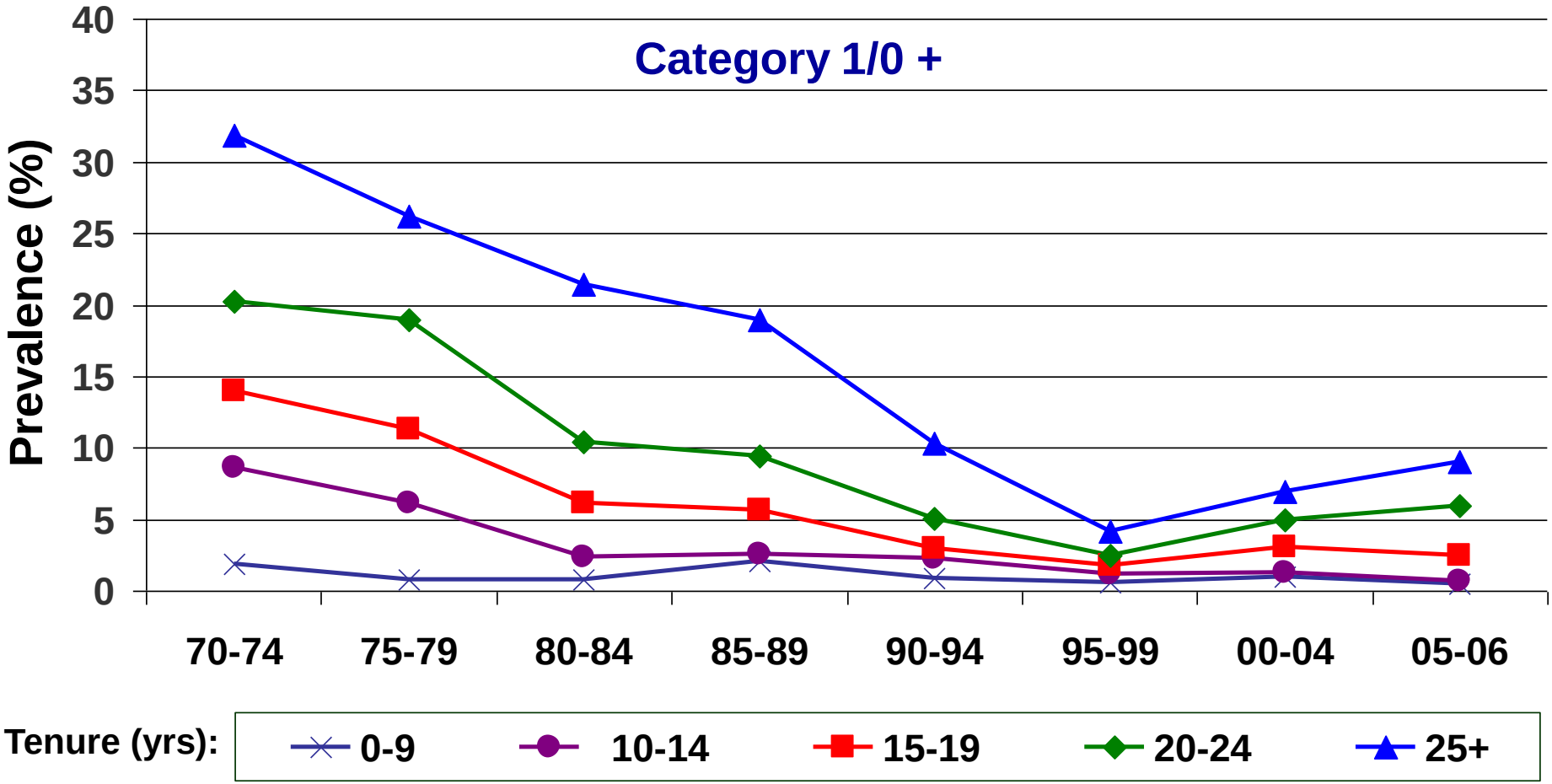
Overexposures for high risk occupations

(MSHA Compliance Sampling Data from 2004 – 2008)



Trends in CWP prevalence by tenure among examinees employed at underground coal mines

(U.S. National Coal Workers' X-Ray Surveillance Program, 1970-2006)

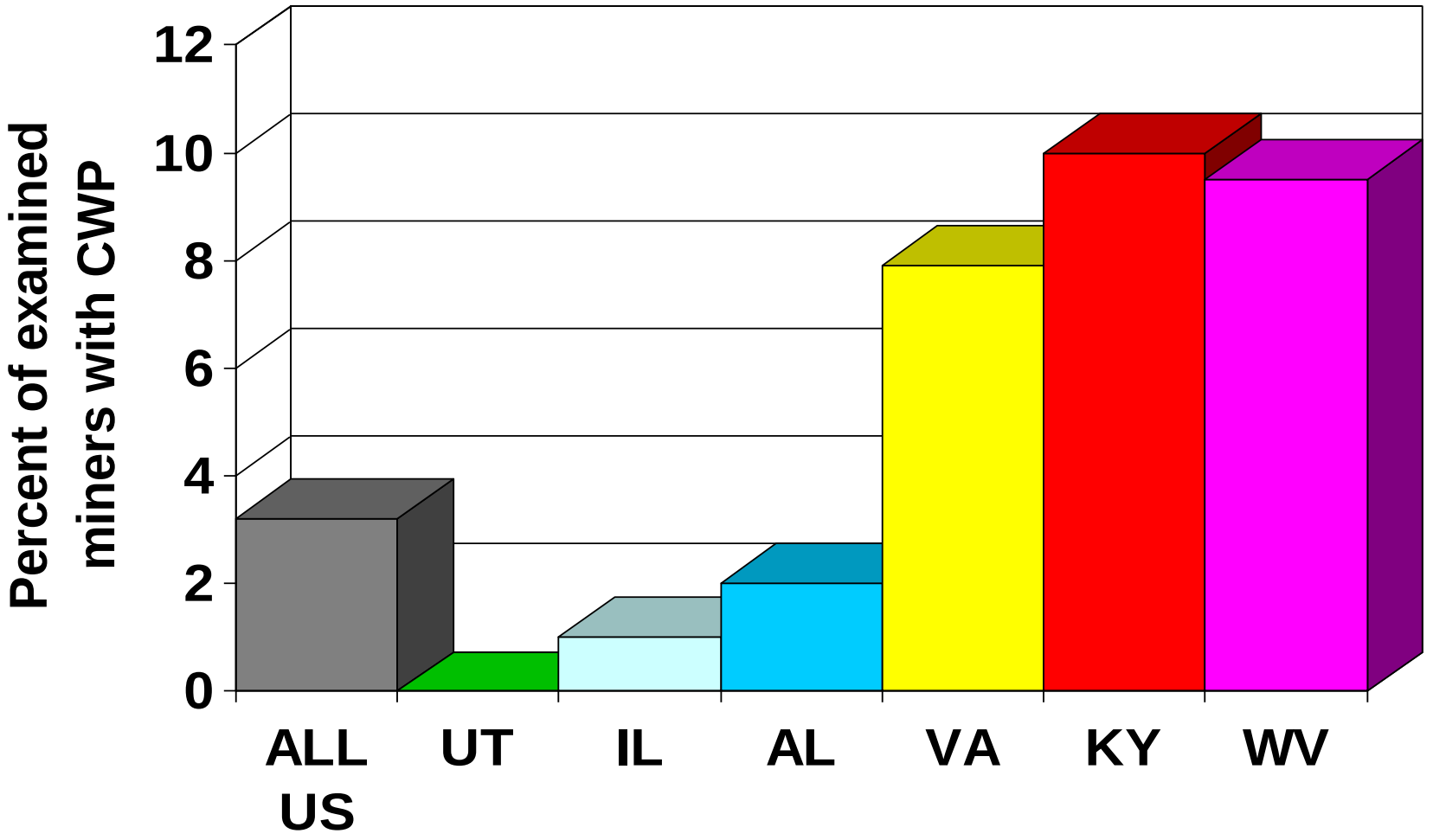


Enhanced Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program

(mobile examination unit travels to mining regions)

- health questionnaires
- work history
- spirometry testing
- chest x-rays

CWP prevalence by state in enhanced miner program



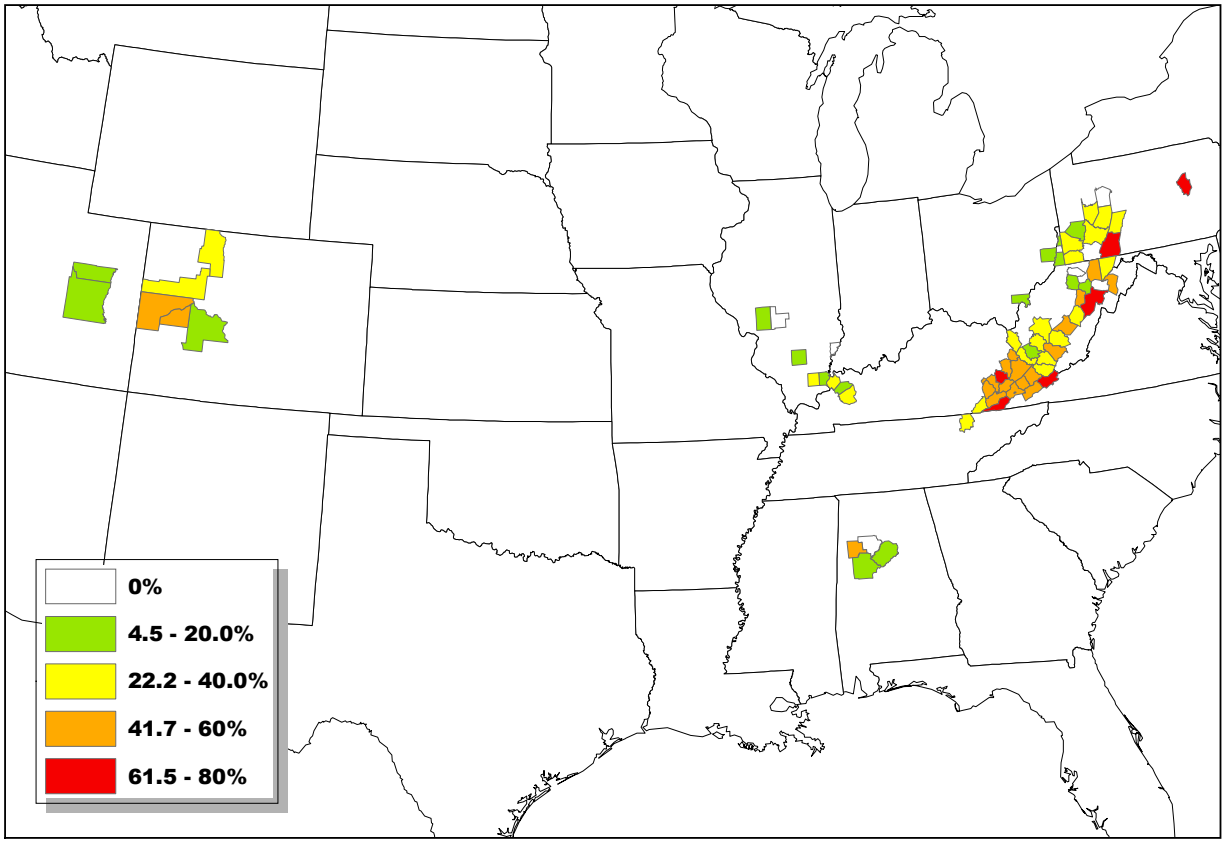
Rapidly Progressive Black Lung by County

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

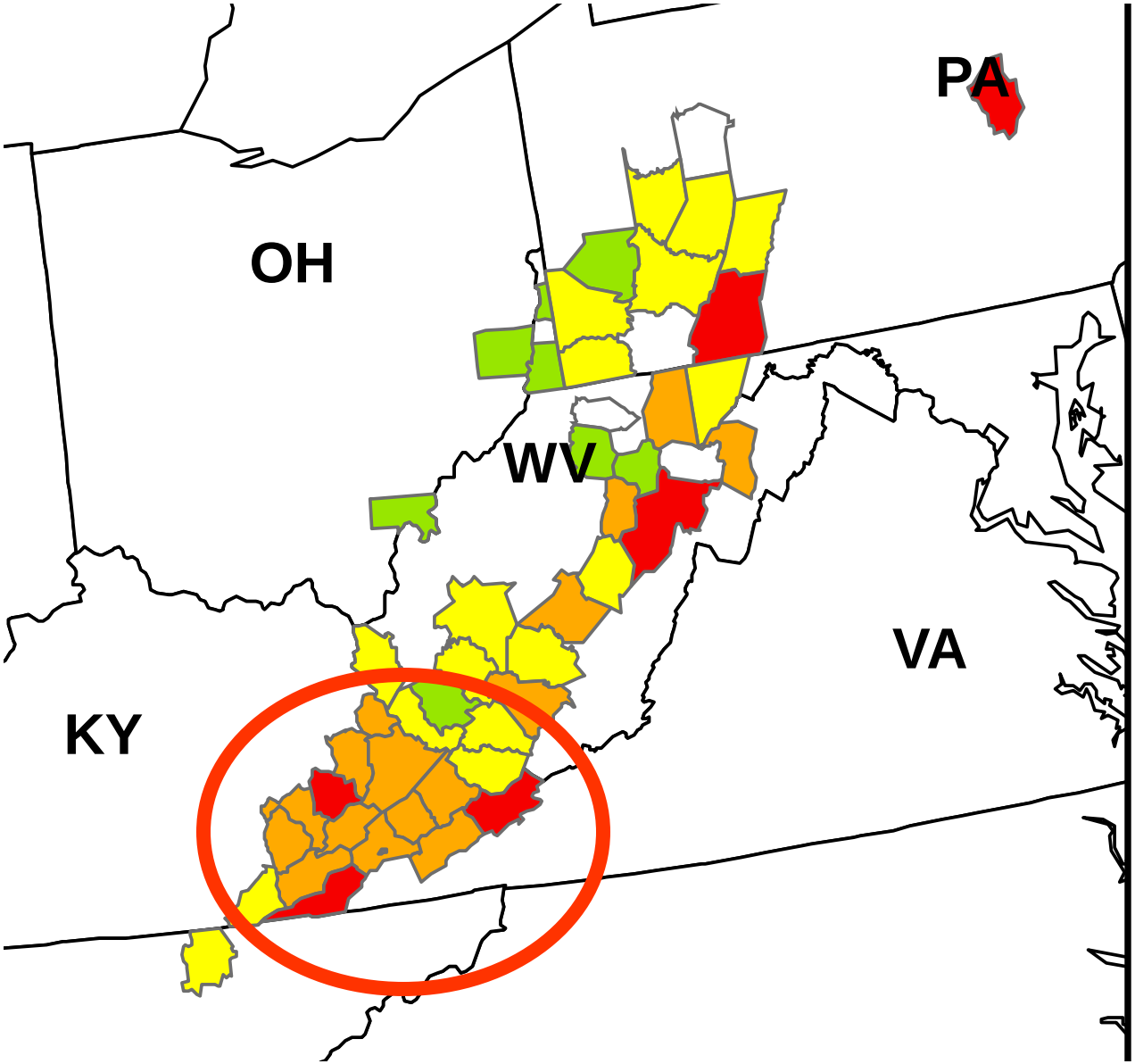
Rapidly progressive coal workers' pneumoconiosis in the United States: geographic clustering and other factors

V C dos S Antao, E L Petsonk, L Z Sokolow, A L Wolfe, G A Pinheiro, J M Hale, M D Attfield

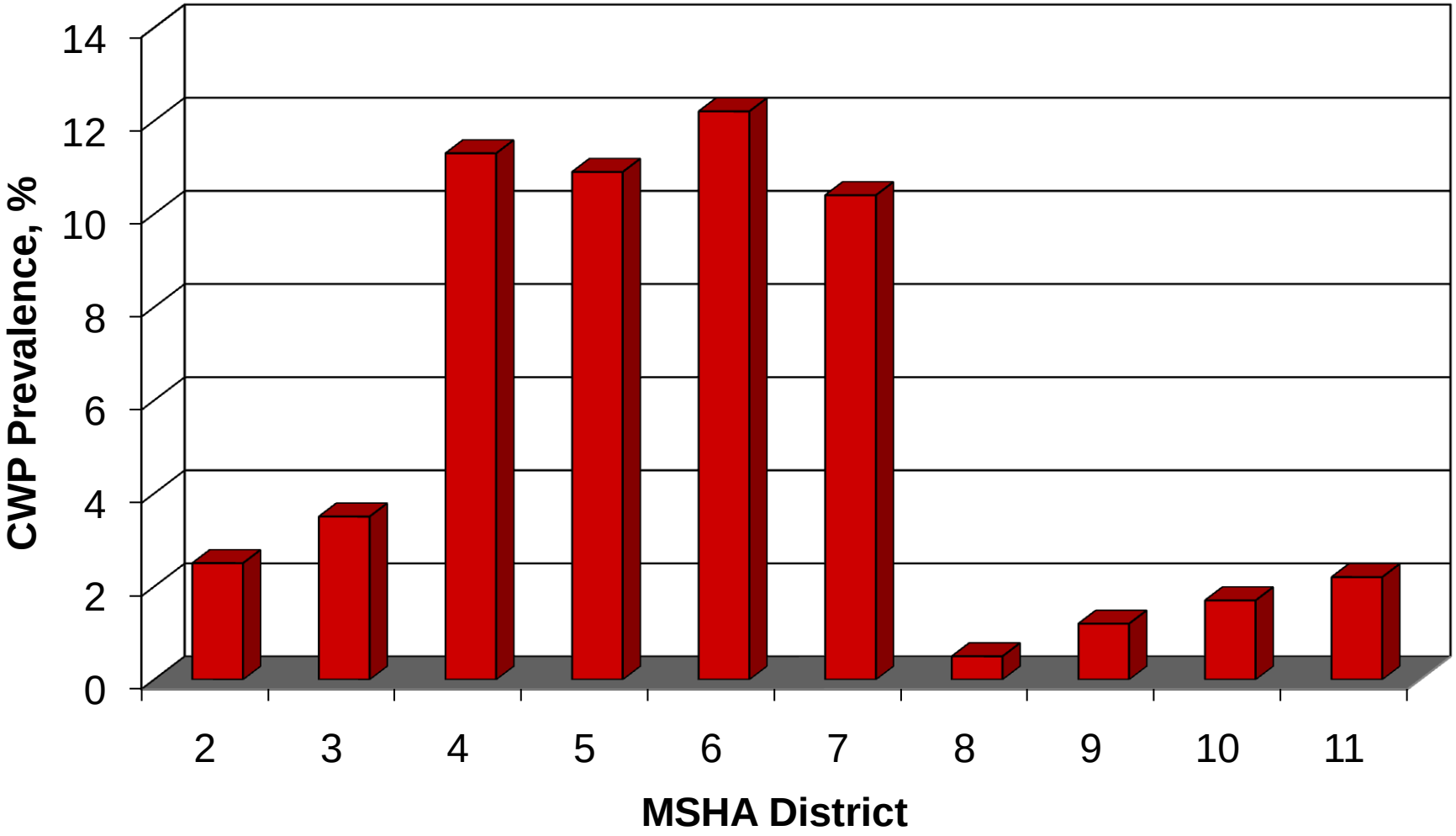
Occup Environ Med 2005;62:670–674. doi: 10.1136/oem.2004.019679



“Hotspots” in Southern Application Region

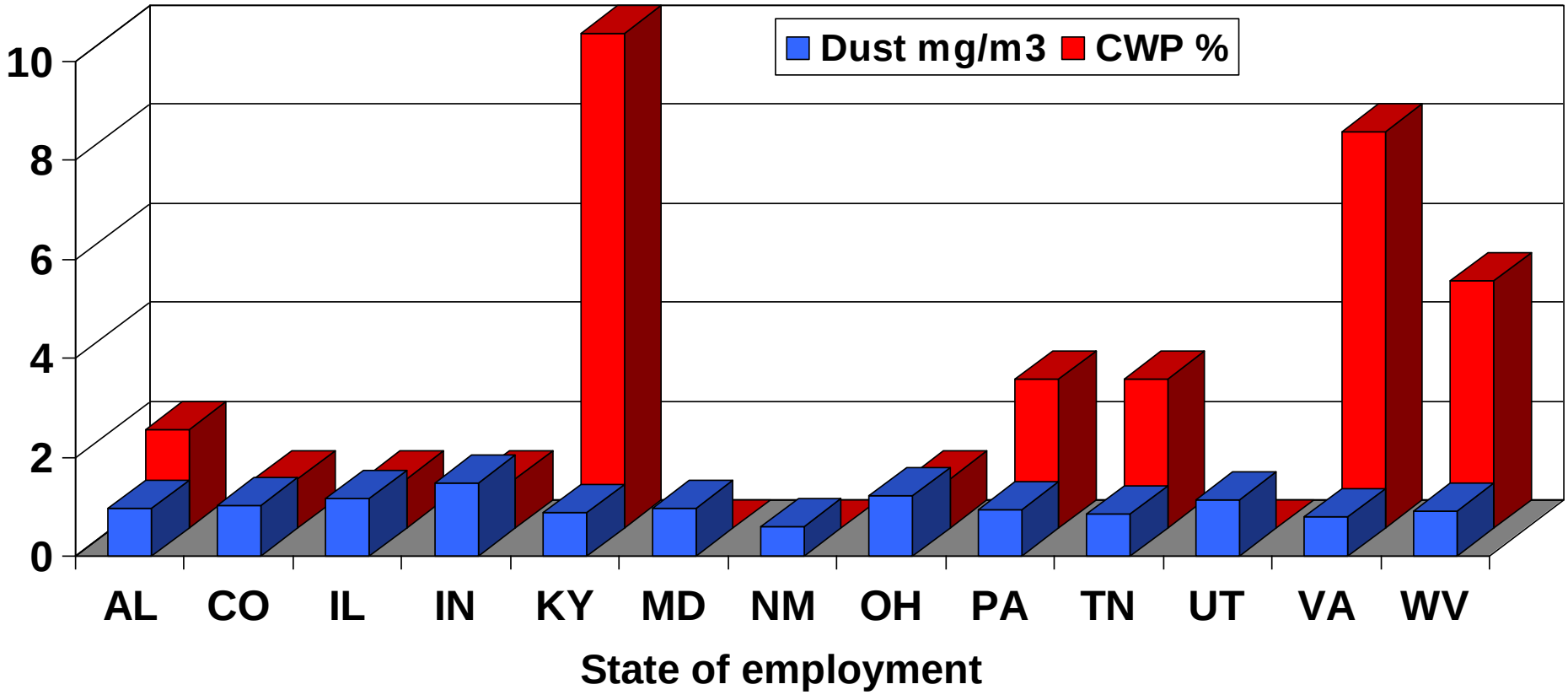


Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis (CWP) Prevalence Rate by District for Working Underground Coal Miners CY 2003 – 2008*



* Includes x-ray results submitted to NIOSH for working underground coal miners, one x-ray per miner per period, and evaluated through 9-30-2008.

CWP prevalence and average dust level by state*



* Average dust concentration for occupational samples collected by MSHA coal mine inspectors from 1975-2008.

Need for improved dust control technology

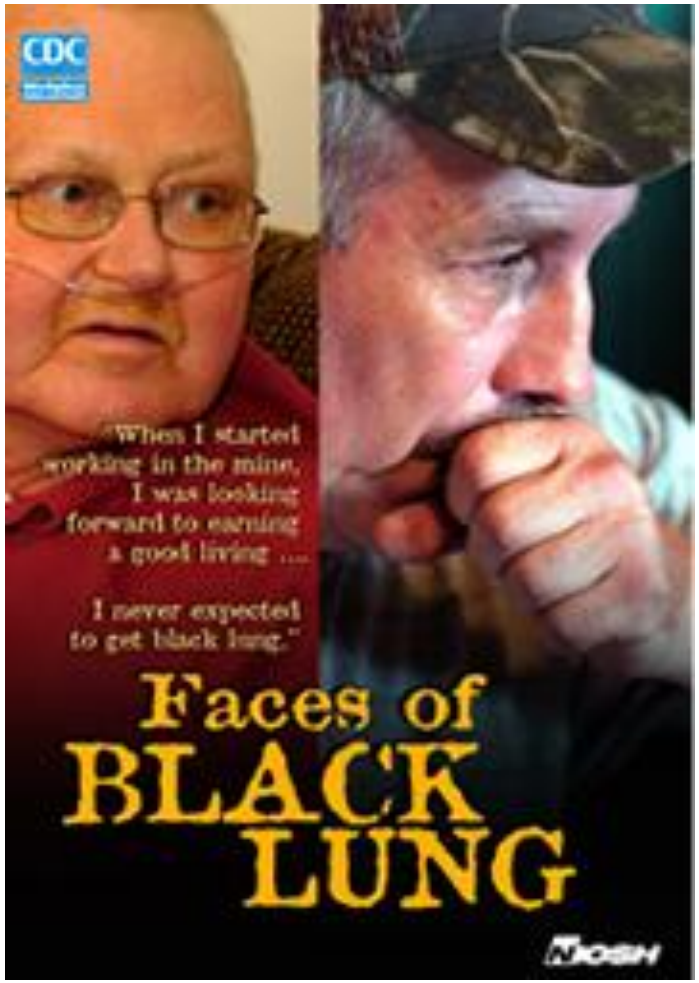
- Overexposures continue for high-risk occupations
- DRDS identified an increase in lung disease, rapid progression of the disease, and disease in younger miners (ECWHSP)
- S-Miner Bill proposed reduced dust standards
  - 1.0 mg/m^3 coal mine dust standard
  - 50 μg/m^3 silica dust standard
- MSHA has placed coal dust on regulatory agenda for 2010 and 2011 for silica
- Geologic conditions increasingly difficult (more rock)
- Production increases generate more dust

NIOSH efforts:

- Continue with ongoing research projects evaluating new control technologies
- Initiated project to examine control technologies, operating practices, and working conditions found in SAR
- Initiated effort to compile publications that summarizes dust control technologies for coal and metal/nonmetal mining (two Best Practices Information Circulars)
- Conduct workshops to assist in transferring information to stakeholders
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders on new ideas for dust control
- DRDS produced “Faces of Black Lung” video to raise awareness of disease

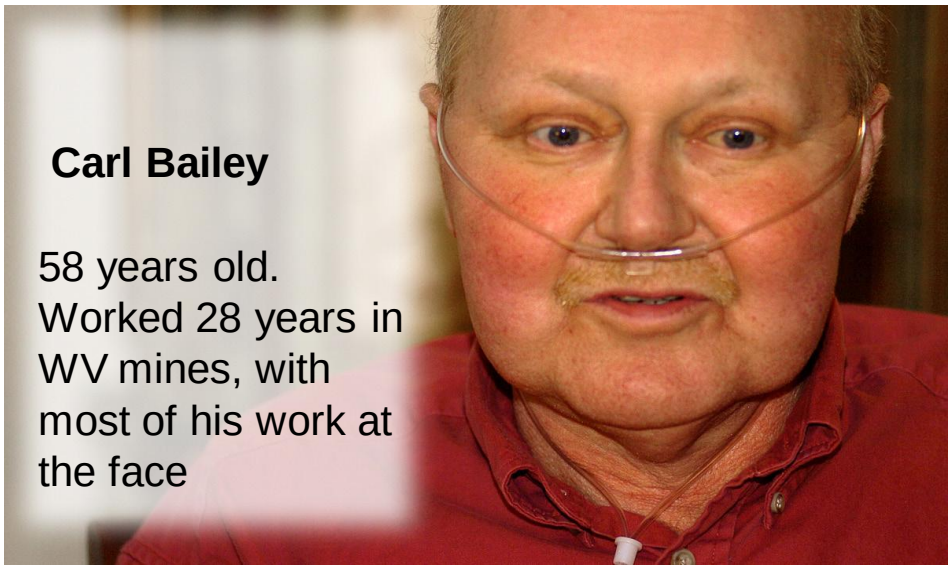
Faces of Black Lung DVD

- DRDS interviewed two miners that have contracted CWP
- Miners discuss the importance of protecting themselves from dust exposure
- Copies available from Anita Wolfe (304) 285 - 6263

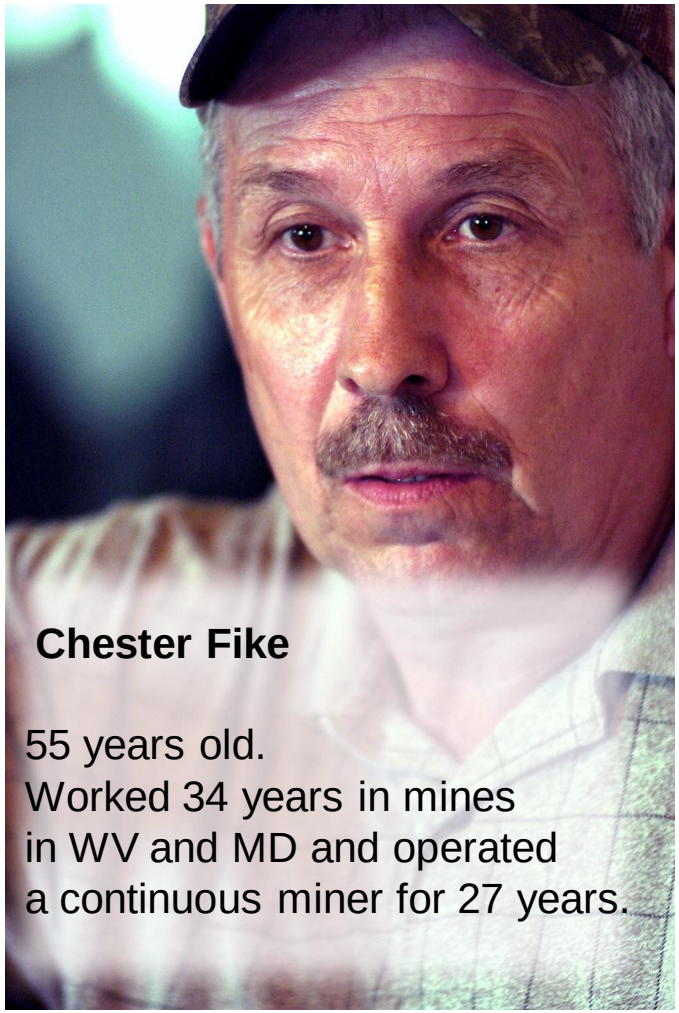


Website for video: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/video/2008-131/default.html

Important messages……..



"And always remember: What's on your face you can wash-off, but what's on your lungs you can't. So be safe, and take care of yourself ".



"I was always trained to avoid injuries and I should've paid more attention to the dust."

Thank you!

Questions??

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