



# Theme 2

Health information and research

Presenter: Prof. Smallwood

# Representation in the group



# 1. Health information

- a) What the burden of occupational diseases in the construction industry?
- b) Are there readily available databases for Occ diseases and injuries in the construction industry?
- c) If No, who should establish and maintain such databases and what can be done to support them?
- d) How will access to such a database be controlled i.e. make it easy for stakeholders to access it while also protecting and safe guarding the dataset?
- e) Is there a need to set targets regarding key milestones in terms of occupational diseases in the construction industry?
- f) What is it about the burden of OD and the data of OD in the construction that this workshop should take forward?

# Burden of disease

- Paucity of data currently (limited information)
- Service providers in the public sector can be a source of information
- Central database
  - Historically NIOH has made attempts: challenge with compliance and reporting
  - Many reasons e.g. Clinicians reporting poor

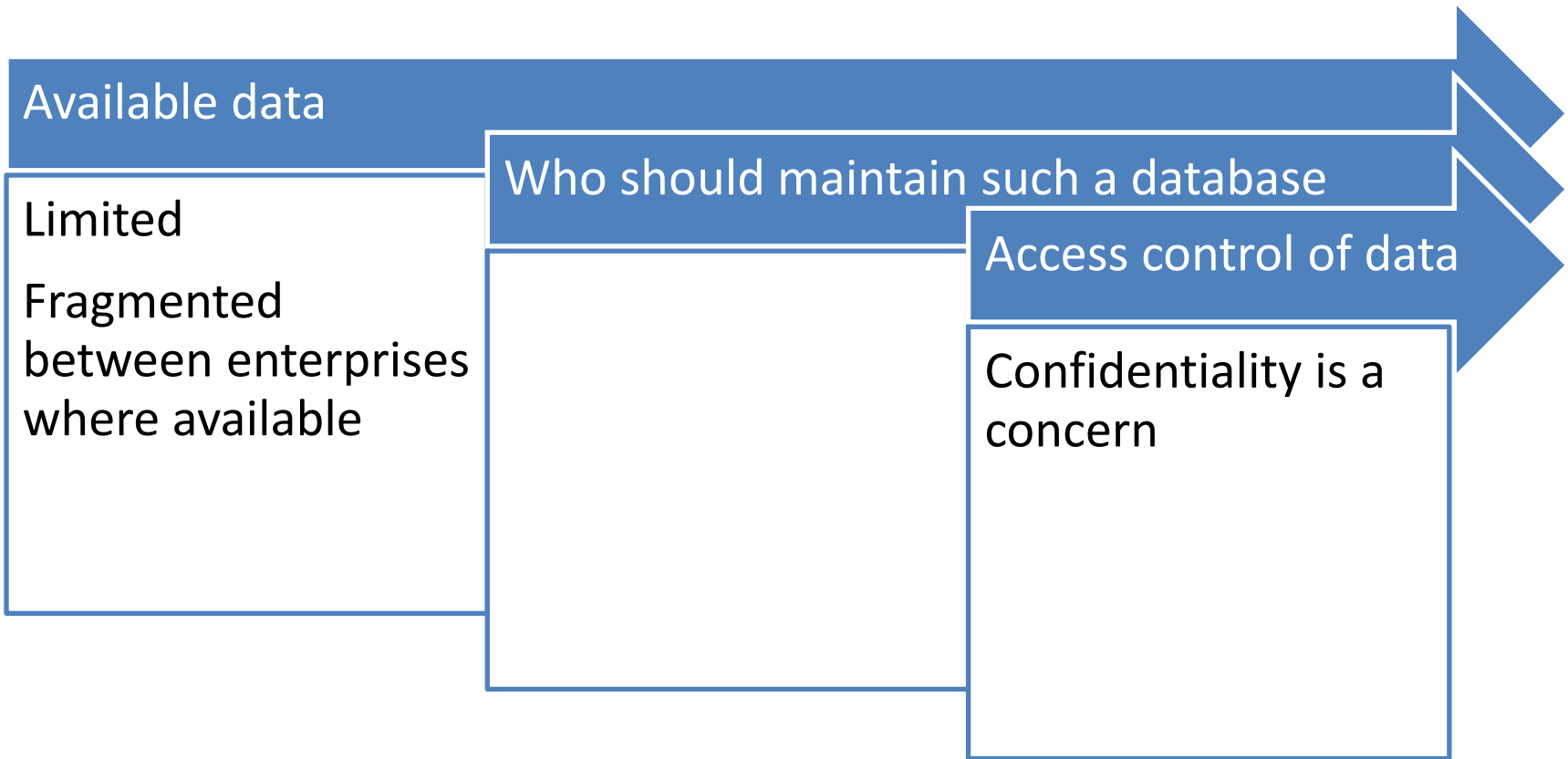
# Challenges

- Private practitioners consulting these patients not aware of link to work & need to report
- Lengthy process to eventual diagnosis of occupational disease
  - Recurrent visits for the patient
  - Costly
- Culture and awareness in the industry
- Compensation process tedious & often unsuccessful: deterrent

# Ideal

- Centralised database
- Medical record for construction workers that is completed at each place of employment
- Central database for medical records
- Standard medical screening protocols & standardised tool for collection of information
- Job spec should be provided to workers
  - (assist clinicians with diagnosis)
- Large general contractors conduct 1 medical yearly

# Databases for Occ. diseases and injuries in the construction industry?



# Recommendations

- Replication of a body such as the Mine Health & Safety Council
- “Mining Health & Safety Council “( requires funding but creates capacity)
  - Active Sentinel sites
  - Surveys
  - Programmes looking at former workers to capture extent of Occ. Diseases & injuries
  - Opportunity to latch on the bigger existing companies



# Opportunities

- Construction Industry development board invited (CIDB)
- Statutory board report to DPW
- Aim to transform the construction industry
  - Could be approached as partners

# Opportunities

- Each organisation uploads their own information onto a central database
  - Challenge with quality of data
  - Crude estimates (may result in)

## 2. Occupational health research

- a) What research is required in order to improve occupational disease management in the construction industry?
- b) Who are the key stakeholders in collaborative research for OD in the construction industry?
- c) What are the research related issues that the workshop should take forward?


# What research is required

- Programme of research / sentinel sites would answer multiple research questions

# Who are the key stakeholders

- 
- “Big 5”
  - Department of labour

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- National Institutes of Occupational health
  - Trade unions

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- Employer associations
  - Technical experts
  - Tertiary educators

# Research related issues to take forward?

- ? OH Research Commissioning agency
  - Identify areas of research as a collective
  - Submit proposal to tripartite structures
  - Contribute to Development of best practice

*THANK YOU*