

Health status as a risk factor for safety: towards closer integration of health and safety

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Symposium: Workforce Health Innovation

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**Bridging the gap between
research and practice**

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Focus in OH&S has been predominantly on safety rather than overall health of worker

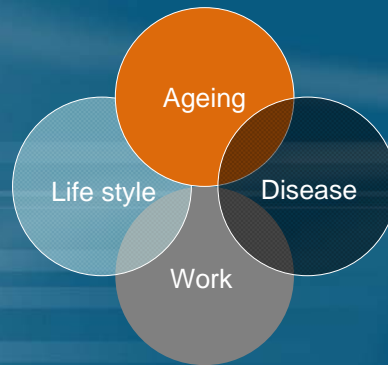
Challenge: is to integrate workplace health promotion with traditional health protection or safety strategies

Workplace Health Promotion



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Interactions between ageing, lifestyle, disease & work are strong



role of work is least known

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Knowledge concerning interaction of specific job demands & workers

- Frequency, intensity and duration of tasks in relation to functional capacity.
- Environmental modifiers.
- Capacities in specific groups : older workers, women.
- Age & safety risks.
- Consequences of specific demands on recovery.

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Work related M/S disorders

- Most common claim for workers compensation.
- Most result from chronic exposure.
- Multi factorial in nature.
- Tissue degradation influenced by level of ongoing exposure.
- Reports generally based on single events rather than identification of cumulative exposure to less severe hazards, or related to psychological stressors, work organisation & job design.

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Collaborative research in injury prevention



- Significant advances made in understanding of the pathophysiology, diagnosis & management of musculoskeletal injury & disorders in the workplace.
- Injury incidence remains high

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Real time monitoring of injury risk factors

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Applications in the workplace



- Assessing physical demands of work: over-exertion, heat stress
- Assessing exposure to risk factors for musculoskeletal injury (posture, loading)

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***Need for age sensitive interventions,
targeted & realistic programs
consistent with work schedule, job
demands & out of work issues.***

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What do we need ?

- Closer integration of age related changes in work related functional capacity with risk management procedures for injury prevention.
- Improved data to better understand working exposures to risk factors for injury.
- Improved procedures/technology to monitor exposure & recovery from M/S loading.

***Think diversity - not a 'one size fits all
approach***

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