

at work

Information on workplace research from the **Institute for Work & Health**

This Issue

For Clinicians

Institute begins work on occupational health nurse study

For Workplace

Institute workshops at IAPA popular; Worker-Centred research conference held

For Policy

Institute President speaking at policy studies conference

For Researchers

New working papers available

This Issue's Supplement

Decision makers are consumed by the choices they have to make on a day-to-day basis. There is a gap between the issues workplace decision makers consider relevant and timely, and those scientists consider important. A recent study, conducted in part at the Institute, has shown that the information considered most important to making decisions can change not only from sector to sector, by over time within the same sector.

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**Research Excellence
Advancing Employee Health**

Institute reflects on successful year at 2000 AGM

The exceptional number of accomplishments achieved by the Institute for Work & Health during the past year was the focus of its annual general meeting, held in Toronto this May. Over 60 invited guests joined members of the Board of Directors and Institute staff in celebrating a successful year.

The Institute's president, Terrence Sullivan, highlighted the numerous national awards and fellowships researchers and trainees have received. Jennifer Payne was named General Motors Post-Doctoral Fellow with The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and Pierre Côté received the Walter Ward Graduate Student Award in Pain Research with the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto. As well, there have been a number of completed PhD and MSc dissertations.



IWH Board Chair Lorna Marsden

"The level of talent contributing to the work of the Institute is extremely encouraging and enables the organization to take advantage of Canada's growing knowledge-based economy," Sullivan said.

Other milestones reached in 1999 included the publication of its 100th scientific working paper, while 24 of its research papers were published in peer-reviewed journals. The Institute also led the development of a number of tool-based solutions that target clinicians and workplaces.

Lorna Marsden, Chair of the Institute's Board, highlighted the areas of renewal throughout the organization, including new board members and research programs, along with implementation of the new research transfer program.

Dr. Marsden spoke of the networks and working relationships the Institute has forged with other organizations along with new research opportunities at the local, national and international level. In addition to hosting the (To be continued on page 2)

Annual Report Available

Report 2000, the Institute's annual report, was presented at the Annual General Meeting. The report, which includes financial information for 1999, examines the changing world of work by highlighting key Institute research and scientists. Copies of the report are available on line at www.iwh.on.ca. A printed copy may be obtained by contacting (416) 927-2027 Ext. 2131 or info@iwh.on.ca.

The Institute for Work & Health is a knowledge-based change organization that strives to research and promote: new ways to prevent workplace disability, improved treatment, and optimal recovery and safe return-to-work.

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(← Continued from cover)

4th International Congress on Medical-Legal Aspects of Work Injuries in June 1999, the Institute co-sponsored a special collection of papers from a symposium on medical, social and economic consequences of work injury and workers' compensation. The symposium was held in conjunction with a number of US-based organizations: the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Centers for Disease Control.

"1999 was an important year for renewal and transition at the Institute. Events and initiatives of the past year are positioning the Institute to provide leadership for many of the research and research transfer opportunities that are taking root in Ontario and beyond. In particular we are looking forward to continued partnerships with the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board and research agencies across the country," Dr. Marsden concluded. 🏡



Cameron Mustard, Richard Allingham & Marianne Levitsky

The Institute's Scientific Director Cameron Mustard gave a brief overview on *The New World of Work: Changes in the Nature of Work and Injury during the Past Decade*.

His comments were in part a reflection of the recent meeting of the Institute's Research Advisory Committee (RAC).

He briefly outlined four key issues that reflect apparent trends of the last decade. These were: the changing structure and organization of work (what is happening in the workplace); to what extent have the efforts of the last ten years, mostly in Ontario, and mostly in the area of primary prevention in the workplace, been effective; the changing nature of clinical practice (secondary prevention) in response to injured workers, and finally, what can we say about changes (good and bad) facilitating the safe and early return to work of injured workers and the management of disability in the workplace.

Mustard devoted most of his remarks to the first two issues and later engaged in a lively discussion with audience members about his report.

WEB USER SURVEY LAUNCHED

An interactive survey has been initiated on the Institute for Work & Health's Web site to determine what information users would like to see on the Web site.

As part of the ongoing process of reaching out to our Web site users, the survey has been created to solicit feedback and determine their needs. With the results of the survey, we hope to further develop content and other initiatives to better reflect what users are interested in seeing while visiting the site.

The 11-question survey, which should take a few moments to fill out, includes questions about the type of information users are looking for, the overall appearance of the site, as well as whether the user would recommend the site for others to visit.

Users who complete the survey will also have the opportunity to subscribe to an e-mail notice list about major Web site updates which would occur about once every two months.

To fill out the survey, please go to: www.iwh.on.ca and click on the "Web User Survey" section on the home page.

If you have questions or comments about the survey or about the Web site, contact Katherine Lukewich, Web Coordinator, at klukewich@iwh.on.ca

So what else is new on the Web site?

Check out *Report 2000*, our annual report to our community is now available on-line in pdf format. Simply click on the icon on the home page and download your own version filled with some of our research initiatives and profiles of our scientific staff.





Workplace

INSTITUTE CONDUCTS WORKSHOPS AT IAPA CONVENTION

Workshops on research and psychosocial stress were part of the Institute's presence at April's Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) conference. Senior scientist Donald Cole, along with research transfer associate Dee Kramer and Bob Norman, chair of the WSIB's Research Advisory Council, delivered important messages to delegates at the conference.



Dee Kramer

One way to build bridges between labour groups, occupational health & safety professionals, and scientists is to demystify the research process. In response to repeated requests for partnering on research projects, and to provide leadership and advice on research, the Institute's Workplace Studies group is doing workshops on how to do research. Cole and Norman began building these bridges with the workshop: *You Too Can Do Research*. 🏔️

You too can do research

Participants were promised they would find out how to get those burning questions answered. How to do searches, develop questions, collect and analyze data, and present results so that others can know what you've found out.

The participants to the workshop came from workplaces that were already tracking health and safety indicators such as lost-time accidents, sickness absences, long-term disability, and job strain. They were interested in research on a variety of topics, including: everything from: tracking injuries, best practices for RSI, the impact of scheduling, shiftwork, the changing workplace, training programs, the health effects of chemicals, improving work station design, stress, and the effect of changing expectations.

Some came with specific research questions such as: "How can workers be protected from exposure to coal fly ash?" and, "How do you separate one-time injuries from those with a definite countermeasure."

The feedback from the session was very positive. Participants said that it was a great introduction to research and that they now have an idea of where to start looking for things. "I liked how the speakers made more sense out of where to start and how to go about research," commented one person.

As well, Cole and Kramer held a workshop on psychosocial stress and workplace injuries. The seminar focused on one of the Institute's research messages: "Reduce injuries and achieve a healthier workplace by improving BOTH the physical and the psychosocial work environment." 🏔️



Donald Cole

Improve BOTH the physical and the psychosocial work environment

Health and safety facilitators, consultants and officers, customer service representatives, an ergonomist, press operators, station attendants, and a fire fighter came together and discussed what stressors in the workplace contribute to strains and sprains.

When asked what contributes to psychosocial stress, the participants suggested a variety of factors: the need for social support and more control over work, supervisor's expectations, pressure to impress coworkers and supervisors, feeling you are being watched, tiredness, increased production and the need to keep the line moving. 🏔️

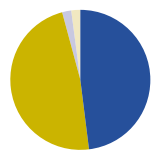
For more information on this topic, contact Dee Kramer at the Institute by phone: (416) 927-2027, Ext. 2146 or e-mail: dkramer@iwh.on.ca.

Do you know the burning issue of the day?

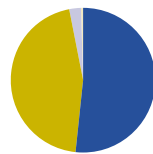
Just about everyone is aware that psychosocial factors are a contributing factor to workplace injuries. This is a result of a questionnaire the Institute distributed to 420 respondents at its trade-show booth at the April IAPA conference.

The IAPA conference is Canada's largest health & safety conference and tradeshow, and attracts over 6,000 representatives from companies committed to health & safety and occupational health & safety professionals.

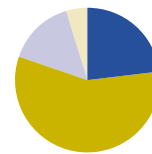
There was an overwhelming response of awareness (411 respondents out of 420), and belief (407 respondents out of 420) that BOTH physical and psychosocial factors need to be considered in reducing injuries and achieving a healthier workplace. Some of the strength of this response can be explained since attendees to the conference are probably more aware than the average person.



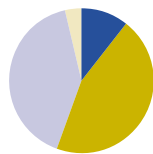
Have heard or read that improving the psychosocial factors can reduce injuries.



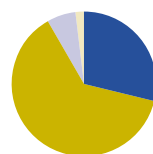
Both the physical and the psychosocial are important in reducing injuries.



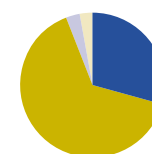
My company's programs address the workplace physical environment.



My company's programs address the workplace psychosocial environment.



This message will directly affect how I do my work.



I will bring this message to my company/union/Health & Safety Committee

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

The questionnaire confirmed that current workplace practices address the physical more than the psychosocial environment. Even among this very select group, some felt that their companies are not doing enough to address the workplace psychosocial environment. It was also clear that the group were prepared to take action around health & safety issues, and say they will take this message back to their workplace. 🏔️

WORKERS LEARNING HOW TO DO RESEARCH

In May, the Institute co-sponsored the first conference on worker-centred research in Ontario. Over 70 people from labour, the unions, the Canadian Injured Workers Alliance and research institutions were together to discuss completed and future research. The workshop addressed one main issue: the subjects of research — the workers — should have a voice in the design of research because the results can have a significant long-term effect on the workplace. It is not enough to be the subject of research. Workers should also be involved in choosing the research team, in designing the

research, in gathering the information, and in interpreting the results.

The conference was organized by the Bancroft Institute, and was co-sponsored by the Institute, the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, and the Canadian Auto Workers. The conference focused on the process of research, the principles of worker-centred research, and the participatory research experience.

Donald Cole from the Institute co-facilitated a workshop with Bob DeMatteo from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, and Karen Messing, from the University of Montreal in Quebec. Some of the principles of worker-centred research that evolved out of their workshop were:

- ▲ Research should focus on how to change and improve things;
- ▲ Research should be for workers who are at risk or who have health and injury problems;
- ▲ Research should be done with progressive academics who are chosen by and trusted by workers;
- ▲ Researchers should ensure that workers who participate do so voluntarily, and guarantee the workers' confidentiality;
- ▲ Research should feed its results back to worker-participants; and
- ▲ Research should be able to be conducted in the workplace. 🏔️



Policy Makers

POLICY RESEARCHERS GATHER IN KINGSTON

The Institute's president, Terrence Sullivan, will be speaking on health and work as part of a four-day conference on social policy at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University.

The conference takes place in Kingston from August 21 to 24 and will focus on social policies and social outcomes in Canada and the USA in the context of increasing economic integration. It is hosted by the Queen's International Institute on Social Policy (QIISP).

Other speakers include Jean-Pierre Voyer, a

member of the Institute's Research Advisory Committee, as well as Michael Wolfson (StatsCan) and Terry Hunsley (QIISP).

For more information on the event, visit the web site at www.qiisp.com. 🏔️

NEW POPULATION/WORKFORCE RESEARCH PUBLISHED

The Institute has four new working papers available from our population/workforce research area. **#84: Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Health-Related Absence from Work: A Canadian Example**, Jennifer I. Payne, John W.

Frank; **#93: Social Cohesion and Health**, John N. Lavis, Gregory L. Stoddart; **#99: Work-Related Population Health Indicators**, John N. Lavis, Cameron A. Mustard, Jennifer I. Payne, Mark S. R. Farrant; and **#102: Gender Differences in Job Strain, Social Support at Work and Psychological Distress**, Marian Vermeulen, Cameron Mustard.

To purchase any of these papers or for more information, contact the Institute at info@iwh.on.ca or visit our web site: www.iwh.on.ca. You may also contact us by phone at (416) 927-2027 Ext. 2131. 🏔️



Clinical

IS YOUR ROLE IN THE WORKPLACE CHANGING?

The Institute for Work & Health is interested in understanding how the role of occupational health nurses is changing. Our researchers would like to hear from you and invite you to participate in a focus group session. For some occupational health nurses, their work role is changing as a result of several possible factors

including Bill 99, which placed responsibility for early, safe return to work on the workplace parties, and the emergence of the new role of the disability manager. Please contact Rhoda Reardon to indicate your interest in participating in this research. 🏔️

Rhoda Reardon may be reached by phone: 416-927-2027 ext. 2174, or by e-mail: rreardon@iwh.on.ca. You may also wish to visit our web site at www.iwh.on.ca.

Electronic Edition of At Work now available

We now post the full text of At Work and Infocus on our web site, in Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF). We have begun an e-mail announcement list to notify those interested when we publish a new issue. The e-mail will be sent once every two months and will contain a summary of the material in the upcoming issue. If you did not receive e-mail notification of this issue (#17) and would like to, or would prefer not to receive a paper copy, please contact the editor at atwork@iwh.on.ca



Research

ADDITIONS TO WORKING PAPER SERIES AVAILABLE

Working Paper #86R

Job Strain and Self-Reported Health Among Working Women and Men: An Analysis of 1994/95 Data, Canadian Population Health Survey - Selahadin Ibrahim et al. 🏔️

Working Paper #88

Multistate Hazard Models for Analyzing

Recurrences of Soft-Tissue Injuries

- Michael S. Manno, Sheilah Hogg-Johnson. 🏔️

Working Paper #90

Informal Educational Communications Among Physicians: Strategies for Research Transfer - Susan Rappolt. 🏔️

Working Paper #107

Reliability and Validity of Two "Expert Methods" for Measuring Psychosocial Job Strain - Alec Ostry et al. 🏔️

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