

OWLinks is brought to you by the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute to enable leaders and professionals to keep abreast of the latest WSH developments and trends from around the world.

SPOTLIGHT

Appointment of WSH Institute Honorary Fellow

We welcome Associate Professor Chui Yoon Ping on board as our Honorary Fellow for 2013 - 2015.

Dr Chui has been with SIM University since 2008 and is currently the Head of the Human Factors in Safety and the Human Factors and Systems programs. She developed the School of Science and Technology "Human Factors Technology Integration Strategic Research Programme" at SIM University and has consulted for various organizations, including the Singapore Airlines and Hewlett Packard (Singapore).



Assoc Prof Chui Yoon Ping
Head, Human Factors in Safety Programme, School of Science and Technology, SIM University

For more information, please visit [HERE](#).

Articles Reviewed In This Issue:

1. **Economic Cost of Work-Related Injuries and ill Health**
 2. **The Economic Burden of Occupational Cancers in Alberta**
 3. **Perceptions of Occupational Injury and illness Costs by Size of Organization**
 4. **Economic Evaluation of a Participatory Ergonomics Intervention in a Textile Plant**
-

Economic Cost of Work-Related Injuries and ill Health

Date of publication: Oct 2012

Source: Asian-Pacific Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety, Vol 19, No 2, Pg 38

Author: Loke Yoke Yun

Synopsis:

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has estimated that about 2.3 million workers die from occupational accidents and diseases every year. This would amount to about 4 per cent of the annual global GDP, or USD2.8 trillion, taking account both the direct and indirect costs of occupational accidents and diseases (such as lost working time, workers' compensation, interruption of production, and medical expenses).

Many companies, more so for the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have viewed WSH as a necessary element of compliance with government regulations and guidelines rather than as a contributory factor to their business profitability. A better understanding on the potential economic impact of good WSH could motivate them to invest in programmes and measures to promote workplace safety and health.

This article summarises the different approaches which USA, UK, Australia and the EU took in the development of their economic models for WSH for estimating the total cost of occupational injuries and diseases.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

The Economic Burden of Occupational Cancers in Alberta

Date of publication: Jun 2010

Source: Public Health Innovation & Decision Support Strategies, Alberta Health Services

Author: Orenstein, M. R., Dall, T., Curley, P., Chen, J., Tamburrini, A. L., & Petersen, J.

Synopsis:

There has been an increasing effort worldwide to identify and prevent occupational cancers. This study was commissioned to estimate the economic burden of cancers in the Alberta province of Canada.

The study estimated that there were 761 new occupational cancer cases in Alberta every year with more than 2,700 people living with cancer due to occupational exposures. The direct cost incurred to their government in the out-of-pocket medical expenditures in treating these patients was estimated to be around \$15.7 million a year. A much higher \$64.1 million was estimated for the annual indirect costs from the loss of economic resources and reduced productivity.

It recommended various prevention strategies to reduce occupational cancer, such as an improved understanding of the circumstances surrounding occupational exposure to carcinogens and involvement of stakeholders for prevention strategies to be translated into action. As occupational cancers are preventable, there is potentially many opportunities to reduce the incidence and cost of occupational cancers.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

Perceptions of Occupational Injury and illness Costs by Size of Organization

Date of publication: Jun 2010

Source: Occupational Medicine, Vol 60, Issue 6, Pg. 484-490

Author: C. Haslam, K. Haefeli and R. Haslam

Synopsis:

This study explored how organisations perceived and monitored occupational injury and illness costs. They interviewed 212 representatives from 49 small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 80 large organisations from various industry sectors across UK.

Besides cost reduction, the other factors that had influenced WSH investments in these companies included the need to protect staff well-being, compliance with legislation, managing human resources, maintaining corporate image and avoiding fines and other legal implications. A prominent concern of the participants of the study was the human impact of work-related injury and illness on both the individuals and their colleagues. 10% of respondents from SMEs and 56% from large organisations perceived injuries to represent substantial business cost. However, most of them were unsure of the financial impact of work-related illness. Most of the SMEs also did not see the benefits of measuring injury and illness costs. On the contrary, about two-thirds of the large organisations did recognise some benefit in monitoring such costs. Most felt that it would be more useful to receive cost information presented as industry-specific case studies than from broad national figures.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

Economic Evaluation of a Participatory Ergonomics Intervention in a Textile Plant

Date of publication: Oct 2012

Source: Applied Ergonomics Vol 44, Issue 3, May 2013, Pg 480–487

Author: Emile Tompa, Roman Dolinschi, Julianne Natale

Synopsis:

This study looked into the effectiveness and cost benefits of participatory ergonomics intervention for a Canadian clothing manufacturer with approximately 300 workers.

The manufacturing company invested CAD 65,787 on interventions, of which more than half could be attributed to time-cost of various people involved in the intervention process. This resulted in a benefit of CAD 360,614 or a benefit-to-cost ratio of 5.5:1. The findings of this study suggested that participatory ergonomics interventions can be cost beneficial for companies. Even though the interventions were typically low-cost and low-tech, implemented by the plant mechanics and maintenance personnel, benefits were realized on both the health and financial fronts.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

Other Useful Resources:

- [Numbers and Costs of Occupational Injury and Illness in Low-Wage](#)

Occupations (Defending Science)

- Medical Care Savings From Workplace Wellness Programs: What Is a Realistic Savings Potential? (Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine) [Access via publisher's website]
- Duration of Sick Leave, Income and Health Insurance (Economics Bulletin)