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## SPOTLIGHT

### **WSH Institute's Executive Director receives 2013 AIHA YANT AWARD**



Dr. Jukka Takala  
Executive Director  
Workplace Safety & Health Institute  
Ministry of Manpower

Annually, the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) presents the AIHA Yant Award to outstanding contributions in industrial hygiene or allied fields to an individual residing outside the United States.

For 2013, the winner is Dr Jukka Takala, Executive Director of Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute.

Dr Takala has more than 30 years of experience in WSH. He is adjunct professor at the Tampere University of Technology in Finland and the Secretary General of the International Panel for Working Life. He served the European Union for 5 years as the Director of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Recently, he had agreed to serve on the Advisory Council for the Center for Safety and Health Sustainability.

Last year, the same award was presented to Mr. Tan Kia Tang, Deputy Director (Occupational Hygiene), Occupational Safety and Health Division, Ministry of Manpower Singapore.

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

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### **Articles Reviewed In This Issue:**

- 1. Pre-conditioning for success: Characteristics and factors ensuring a safe build for the Olympic Park**
  - 2. Manual material handling advice and assistive devices for preventing and treating back pain in workers (Review)**
  - 3. Psychological health and safety in the workplace – Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation**
  - 4. A Small Business Worksite Wellness Model for Improving Health Behaviors**
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**Pre-conditioning for success: Characteristics and Factors Ensuring a Safe Build for the Olympic Park**

**Date of publication:** 2012

**Source:** Research Report RR955, Health and Safety Executive, UK.

**Author:** Helen M Bolt, Roger A Haslam, Alistair G Gibb, Patrick Waterson

**Synopsis:**

This study looked at the contributions of human and organisational interactions to the successful construction of the 2012 London Olympic Park, which was delivered on time, within budget and with an excellent health and safety record. The study revealed a range of overarching factors that had contributed to the positive outcome, including:

- leadership
- worker involvement
- cultural change
- communication systems
- contracts and procurement
- risk management
- monitoring and assurance

People and their focussed collaborative interactions, especially those in the supply chain, helped to secure the success of the immensely challenging construction programme. This success was not a matter of chance, but through clear and consistent focus on people's commitment, collaboration, transparency and communications. The research also demonstrated practical steps that can be adopted for the industry.

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

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**Manual Material Handling Advice and Assistive Devices for Preventing and Treating Back Pain in Workers (Review)**

**Date of publication:** Jun 2011

**Source:** Issue 6, The Cochrane Library

**Author:** Jos H Verbeek, Kari-Pekka Martimo, Jaro Karppinen, P Paul FM Kuijer, Eira Viikari-Juntura, Esa-Pekka Takala

**Synopsis:**

There is evidence that workers who are physically lift and/or move heavy objects on a regular basis are at higher risk of developing back pain. To prevent such injuries, training and assistive devices are often put in place.

This study found that training workers in proper manual material handling techniques or providing them with assistive devices may not be effective interventions by themselves in preventing back pain. This finding is the result of a systematic review of a large collection of scientific research articles.

The report also discussed possible explanations on the uncertainty in its conclusions. More high quality research with greater number of workers, more assured measurement of back pain incidents, and longer follow-up periods are needed. There is also a need for better understanding on the biomechanical causal chain in the development of back pain.

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

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## **Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace – Prevention, Promotion, and Guidance to Staged Implementation**

**Date of publication:** Jan 2013

**Source:** CSA Z1003/BNQ 9700-803, Canadian Standards Association / Bureau de normalisation du Québec

**Author:** Mental Health Commission of Canada, Bureau de Normalisation du Québec, and Canadian Standards Association

### **Synopsis:**

Canada developed this national standard to help organisations strive towards the vision of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace, one which actively works to prevent harm to workers' psychological health and which promotes psychological well-being. On average, organisations that implement psychologically healthy and safe workplace strategies are:

- better able to recruit and retain talent
- have improved employee engagement
- enhanced productivity
- have higher profit levels
- less conflicts and grievances
- less turnover, disability, injury rates, absenteeism and morale problems

This voluntary standard serves as a guide to developing and sustaining a psychologically healthy and safe workplace. It provides a framework for companies to

- (i) identify potential mental health hazards,
- (ii) assess and mitigate psychological risks and
- (iii) implement measures to promote psychological health and safety in the workplace.

It uses case studies to illustrate how the Standard can be tailored to large and small companies to improve their psychological working environments. Sample implementation checklists and audit tools are also provided.

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

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## **A Small Business Worksite Wellness Model for Improving Health Behaviors**

**Date of publication:** Oct 2012

**Source:** Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, Vol 00, No 00, p 1 – 6, 2012

**Author:** Ray M. Merrill

### **Synopsis:**

Workplace wellness programmes can promote better worker productivity and employee health. This study assesses the effectiveness of a wellness programme on improving employee health behaviours and personal health. Analyses were based on 618 employees from 5 small diverse businesses, namely a brokerage firm, a professional employer organisation, an integrated health care service company, an engineering firm, and a food sales and service corporation. All employees were encouraged to complete a baseline personal health assessment and to participate in at least one behaviour change campaign.

The study showed that improved health perception and life satisfaction were directly related to increased exercise, improved dietary practices (such as fruit intake) and sleep. However, job satisfaction seemed to have declined. It revealed that more efforts are required to engage male employees and those with poorer health. Higher participation could be achieved with small incentives.

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

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**Other Useful Resources:**

- [Impact of Weight Gain on Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Japanese Male Workers](#) (Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine) [Access via publisher's website]
- [Laboratory Safety Guidance](#) (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)