
OWLlinks 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

WSH Institute Forum on "Maximising Returns through WSH Innovations"

Is poor posture the cause for your back ache?

How can we engage staff to keep us informed of WSH practices on the ground?

What is the cost of work injuries and ill health?

For the answers to these questions, join us at the WSH Institute Forum on "**Maximising Returns through WSH Innovations**".

Besides introducing innovative mobile applications to enable you to work more effectively and efficiently, we have also invited an overseas expert, Mr Richard Webster from Safe Work Australia, to share with us on the cost of injuries and illnesses from work-related activities. From the local scene, we have Ms Heidi Tan, Principal Occupational Therapist from Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) to share with us on TTSH's ergonomics programme. She will also give us some case examples of successful ergonomics interventions.

The details of the forum are:

Date: 30th January 2013 (Wednesday)

Time: 1430-1730hrs (Registration starts at 1400hrs)

Venue: NTU@One North Campus, Executive Centre Auditorium 302, Level 3

Address: 11 Slim Barracks Rise Singapore 138664 (off North Buona Vista Road)

3 SDU points will be awarded to relevant attendees (pending confirmation).

As seats are limited, they will be available on a first-come-first-served basis. For further information about the forum and registration, please click [here](#).

In this issue, we are featuring interesting articles related to an Ageing Workforce. We hope you find these articles useful and relevant.

Articles Reviewed In This Issue:

- 1. How BMW is defusing the demographic time bomb**
- 2. Health and safety of the older worker**
- 3. Age related changes and safety critical work**
- 4. Promoting active ageing in the workplace**

How BMW is defusing the demographic time bomb

Date of publication: March 2010

Source: Harvard Business Review

Author: Christoph H. Loch, Fabian J. Sting, Nikolaus Bauer, and Helmut Mauer mann

Synopsis:

The BMW plant in Dingolfing, Lower Bavaria, was concerned that its competitive edge would be threatened by its rapidly ageing workforce. To address this issue, it selected one of its production lines for a pilot project, staffing it with workers at an average age of 47 years which will be the average age of their plant's workers in the year 2017. Management and workers worked together to develop productivity improving changes that will better manage healthcare concerns, enhance workers skills and improve the work environment. 70 small changes in design and equipment that improved ergonomics were also implemented. The overall cost was only about €40,000 but the productivity increased by 7% in one year, making it on par with that of younger workers. The production line also reported zero defects and a low 2% absenteeism rate, below that of the plant's.

To read more, click [here](#) (Access via publisher's website)
To view video, click [here](#)

Health and safety of the older worker

Date of publication: Jan 2012

Source: Volume 62 Issue 1, Journal of Occupational Medicine

Author: A.Farrow and F.Reynolds

Synopsis:

As the UK government raises the pension age, the number of paid employees over 60 is expected to increase, causing some concerns on possible increase in work-related illness and accidents for employees above 60 years of age.

Very little direct evidence was found in this systematic review concerning safety practices and health risks of these workers. Some safety risks identified were associated with specific age-related physical declines, such as age-related hearing loss. Overall, older workers had fewer accidents and injuries, but these were more likely to be serious or fatal when they occurred.

To read more, click [here](#)

Age related changes and safety critical work

Date of publication: 2012

Source: Research Report RR946, Health and Safety Executive, UK.

Author: Helen Beers & Colleen Butler

Synopsis:

This report aimed to assess existing evidence on age related changes in performance and safety critical work. It also identifies tools that help duty holders to assess human function and performance.

It was found that age related declines did not necessarily have a negative impact on work performance, especially when abilities and expertise matched job requirements. The report also identified 35 tools or questionnaires that could be used by duty holders to assess changes in human functions, capabilities and performance.

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

Promoting active ageing in the workplace

Date of publication: Mar 2012

Source: European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

Author: Juhani Ilmarinen

Synopsis:

The European Union is expected to see an increase of older workers (55-64 years old) over the next few decades, making up 30% or more of the working population in many of its member countries.

This article highlighted that occupational health and safety would play a crucial role in securing active ageing through a better and longer work life. Adjustments at work were needed to address older workers' health problems so they can be able to continue in their work and not retire early. It featured 6 workplace reforms that could improve the older workers' work ability, recommended appropriate approaches to utilise their strengths, manage their needs and capabilities. Cost benefit analysis showed a very good return on investment in work ability promotion - €3–5 return for every €1 spent. This return was partly derived from lower rates of sick leave, lower work disability costs and higher productivity.

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

Other Useful Resources:

- [A means to many ends - Older workers' experiences of flexible working](#)
- [The impact of aging on work disability and return to work \(Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine\)](#) *(Access via publisher's website)*