



the monitor

keeping industry informed of developments in occupational health and safety



Workshop presenter Shawn M Galloway

Safety culture excellence workshop

MARCSTA will host a one day Professional Development Workshop at the Function Centre, Technology Park, Bentley on Wednesday, 30 November 2011.

The workshop will be highly interactive and directed to the objective of achieving and sustaining excellence in culture and performance within organisations.

Some of the issues for consideration have been highlighted in the registration form recently forwarded by email to Monitor readers.

Intending registrants can familiarise themselves with the work of the workshop co-ordinator, Shawn Galloway, in an article titled "Five Steps to Safety Culture Excellence" (see www.proactsafety.com/articles/five-steps-to-sustainable-safety-culture-excellence). Shawn is a Partner, President and Chief Operating Officer of ProAct Safety, an international safety excellence firm. He has assisted hundreds of international organisations to achieve and sustain excellence in safety culture and operational performance. He is also the host of the highly acclaimed podcast series, Safety Culture Excellence, a columnist for several magazines and co-author of the upcoming book Steps to Safety Culture Excellence.

Participants will be grouped appropriately to ensure a diversity of inputs and be expected to develop safety culture excellence methodologies for implementation at their respective operations. Processes for providing feedback on the success or otherwise of these interventions will be established.

You are encouraged to be involved with a co-ordinator who is strongly motivated to ensure participants learn how to transformationally enhance their systems, performance and culture from within their organisations, which is where true sustainability lies.

Shawn Galloway's attendance is being heavily subsidised by MARCSTA.

Visit www.marcsta.com to download the registration form.

In this issue . . .

Harmonisation of OHS laws in Australia to be delayed.....	3
WorkCover NSW requirements for certificates of currency removed.....	4
WorkCover WA annual statistical report	5
Long duration claims	5
Removal of age-based limits on workers' compensation triggers immediate response by WorkCover WA	5
National strategy to improve road safety approved.....	6
Changing the way we classify injury/disease - prevention focused consideration of case in OHS	6
New emergency communications capability for the mining industry.....	7
US mine operator incurs penalties of US\$900,000.....	7
Long term noise exposure = fewer injuries	8
US research award recognises prevention of hearing loss in construction workers	8
Local company lands major international contract.....	8
The value of ear plug fit testing confirmed.....	9
Sick workers burden the economy	10
Mental health and mining	10
Workplace bullying complaints increase in Victoria.....	11
WorkHealth checks in Victoria highlight health concerns....	11
New drug offers hope in stroke fight	11
Optimism associated with lower risk of stroke.....	11
Depression increases risk of mortality in type 2 diabetes....	12
Women and depression.....	12
Mesothelioma cases on the increase	12
Aging and mental health in the decade ahead.....	12
Chronic diseases the world's leading killer	13
Four healthy behaviours lead to a longer life	14
Keep workplace wellness initiatives and safety and health programs together	14
Obesity disrupts heartbeats	15
NSW government gets tough on obesity.....	15
New research reveals the importance of slow wave sleep... 16	
Teamwork helps conquer occupational fatigue	16
The genetics of sleep personality	16
Increasing evidence of the health consequences of long working hours	16
African visitors complete MARCSTA's induction	17
Mining industry leads the way in OHS training.....	17
Industry response to introduction of mandatory induction in the construction sector	17
Around the globe	18
MARCSTA members.....	20
MARCSTA training providers	20



Issue 4

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MARCSTA training packages

As a Registered Training Organisation, MARCSTA delivers occupational safety and health units of competency for the following national training packages:

- Transport and Logistics
- Business Services
- Resources and Infrastructure Industry
- Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework

Applications for recognition of prior learning may be lodged for all training programs.



Harmonisation of OHS laws in Australia to be delayed

It is now quite clear that the transition to harmonised OHS laws in Australia will not occur by the proposed deadline of 1 January 2012.

Safe Work Australia has released a modified and enlarged version of the Model Work Health and Safety Regulations following public comment on version one and it is expected that respective states will take some time to consider and accept the changes that have been proposed.

Safe Work Australia has also released 15 additional model Codes of Practice which support the new Model Work Health and Safety Legislation.

- First Aid in the Workplace
- Managing Risks in Construction Work
- Preventing Falls in Housing Construction
- Managing Electrical Risks at the Workplace
- Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals
- Managing Risks of Plant in the Workplace
- Safe Design of Building and Structures
- Excavation Work
- Demolition Work
- Spray Painting and Powder Coating
- Abrasive Blasting
- Welding and Allied Processes
- Safe Access in Tree Trimming and Arboriculture
- Preventing and Managing Fatigue in the Workplace
- Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying

Closing dates for public comment on the majority of model codes is just prior to Christmas so most OHS professionals are in for a busy time.

The Model Regulations and Codes of Practice are now with the Minister for final approval.

The Western Australian Government has indicated that it is in no hurry to introduce the model legislation and this has drawn strong criticism from the union movement who point out that the Workplace Relations Ministerial Council agreed to the harmonisation more than two years ago.

The Victorian Government has also requested a deferral for 12 months of the implementation of the national harmonisation.

The mining industry which will continue to operate under separate, though similar, legislation is unlikely to experience any alteration to the status quo before 2013.

WORKCOVER NSW REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY REMOVED

WorkCover NSW has reminded employers that from October 2011 operators of the following load shifting machines will no longer need Certificates of Competency:

- front end loaders (Class LL)
- front end loader-backhoes (Class LB)
- front end loaders of the skid steer-type (Class LS)
- excavators (Class LE)

Under the new arrangements employers (or controllers of the plant) must ensure that operators can do their job safely, have received adequate information, instruction, training and supervision, and are competent to operate the plant safely. Ongoing training should be provided to maintain operator competency and be regularly reviewed to identify the hazards associated with the plant, the specific tasks and the workplace.

It is claimed that the harmonisation process will lower compliance costs and red tape for employers while maintaining a robust work health and safety framework in NSW.

It is hard to understand how this will be achieved by removal of certificates of competency.

Source: The West Australian, 26 September 2011

WA's offshore oil and gas to be regulated nationally

A single national regulator will be established for the offshore oil and gas industry under legislation passed by the Senate.

WA's Mines and Petroleum Minister, Norman Moore, is critical of the change saying he has doubts about the ability of the federal government to do the job.

Australia ratifies ILO conventions

The Australian Government has recently ratified the Protocol to the OHS Convention 1981 (No. 155), the Part-Time Work Convention and the Convention Concerning Safety in the Use of Asbestos.

ACTU President, Ged Kearney, said that these ILO standards provide important safeguards for workers' rights and their ratification is an additional protection.

The Part-Time Work Convention ensures part-time workers have the same rights in relation to OHS and discrimination as their full-time counterparts. Ratification of the Protocol to the OHS Convention focuses on ensuring employers record and notify relevant authorities of accidents and diseases at work.

Source: ACTU Release 1 August 2011

WorkCover WA – annual statistical report 2006/07-2009/10

The recent statistical report, released by WorkCover WA, provides a comprehensive overview of claims activity and key trends in the Western Australian compensation system.

Some important aspects are that:

- the rate of long duration claims (60 days or more off work) has increased over the past four years
- there has been a noticeable increase in lost time claim frequency for workers aged 60 years or more
- musculoskeletal injuries continue to account for approximately 50% of all lost time claims, caused as a result of physical stress on muscles, tendons and ligaments
- the majority of costs (62%) are incurred by claims with 180 days or more time off work

Industries with the highest frequency lost time claims per one million hours worked are:

Arts and recreation	17.5
Health care and social assistance	15.4
Manufacturing	15.4
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	13.9
Transport, postal and warehousing	11.8
Construction	11.6

The all industry average is 9.1

(Mining is close to the lowest at 6.5)

High risk occupations include technicians, trades workers, labourers, community and personal service workers, machinery operators and drivers

Source: WorkCover WA

Long duration claims 2004/05 – 2009/10

WorkCover's Statistical Report on Long Duration Claims shows that the number of long duration claims rose by 29 per cent between 2004/05 and 2009/10 despite the number of lost time claims decreasing by 12%.

In 2009/10 claims of 180 or more days represented 12.8 per cent of all claims but accounted for 59 per cent of all costs.

The most common type of injury associated with long duration claims was sprains and strains which accounted for more than 60 per cent of long duration claims each year.

Over this period, claims resulting in permanent total incapacity had the highest average cost of \$147,810.

It is clear that the long duration claim incidence rate needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Removal of age-based limits on workers' compensation triggers immediate response by WorkCover WA

WorkCover WA has been quick to increase recommended premium rates following legislative amendments to remove age-based limits on workers' compensation entitlements.

With actuarial estimates of the initial annual impact likely to be \$11.9m in a full year it might have been expected that this amount could have been recovered in premiums for 2012-13 when some real information confirmed that estimate.



NATIONAL STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY APPROVED BY AUSTRALIA'S TRANSPORT MINISTERS

Australia's transport ministers have unanimously approved a national strategy to drive the voluntary uptake of technology in the road freight industry to improve road safety, reduce transport costs and cut emissions.

They have also approved the NTC's policy paper on electronic systems for heavy vehicle driver fatigue and speed compliance policy paper.

The strategy and policy paper were developed in consultations between government, industry and unions.

Source: NTC Release 3 Aug 2011

Changing the way we classify injuries/disease – prevention-focused consideration of cases in OHS

In an interesting article by Stephen Altree-Williams, appearing in the July edition of the *Journal of Health and Safety Research and Practice*, the author claims that there is a pressing need to reduce the incidence of traumatic fatalities and serious injuries in Australian workplaces and suggests a new approach to how this might be achieved.

He proposes the separation of OHS cases into the three domains compatible with the natural causations of OHS cases, namely:

- the occupational injury (safety) domain
- the occupational disease domain; and
- the public health influence domain

He contends that reporting of the separate rate data for each domain has the potential to greatly enhance the effectiveness of this endeavour because of the

substantially different contribution to outcome in each domain made by factors such as hazard, hazard energy, exposure profile through time, individual susceptibility and public health influence.

The author provides analysed data from the various Australian industry divisions using the Australian national OHS data for 2010 by way of graphical examples.

He also notes that these three domains naturally align with the associations of OHS professional disciplines in Australia whose members have been formally accredited through education, practice and certification benchmarks.

The proposals would be an appropriate matter for discussion at a professional development workshop.

Source: *Journal of Health and Safety Research and Practice*

MSHA (USA) has approved a wireless, through-the-earth communications system developed by Lockheed Martin and tested successfully in three mines.

The system will bring a tremendous emergency communications capability to the mining industry in the event of an accident where miners are trapped and have no other means of communicating with rescue teams on the surface, according to the company.

Demonstrations have been conducted at mines in Pennsylvania and Virginia in 2009/10 where two-way text and voice communications were tested successfully to a depth of 500 metres and two-way text communications to in excess of that depth.

Source: OHS online 21 Jul 2011



US mine operator incurs penalties of US\$900,000

MSHA have announced a judgement of penalties totalling \$905,825 against a coal company resulting from citations issued more than four years ago.

Seventy-six violations contributed to an explosives detonation that killed one miner at an underground coal mine.

The accident occurred because the mine operator failed to comply with approved ventilation and roof control plans, engaged in poor blasting practices, used unqualified personnel and failed to conduct proper pre-shift examinations.

Source: US Department of Labor Release 11-1215-PHI

Long-term noise exposure = fewer injuries

A study published online in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* yields some surprising results: workers exposed to noise over long periods of time have a **decreased** risk of injuries.

In an effort to assess the effect of chronic noise exposure on serious workplace injury and to determine how the timing of exposure influenced risk, researchers examined nearly four decades worth of data on 26,000 British Columbia workers.

They found that cumulative noise exposure was associated with a decreased risk for injuries, with the risk generally decreasing as cumulative noise levels increased. Sub-chronic noise exposure, in contrast, was associated with an increased risk for injury.

The study's authors concluded that workers who were exposed to noise for long periods of time might develop effective methods of communicating the risk and preventing injuries in noisy environments.

Source: ISHN

US research award recognises prevention of hearing loss in construction workers

The national award for innovative research has been awarded to researchers from the University of Washington for a collaboration that developed and tested the effectiveness of training and reinforcement in hearing protection use among construction workers.

The goal of the awarded project was to increase use of hearing protection devices in construction work, especially during periods of high noise exposure, and the prevention of noise induced hearing loss among construction workers.

The findings demonstrated that the hearing conservation training was successful in increasing use of hearing protection among construction workers.

As a result, the researchers have shared the training materials with dozens of contractors and trade groups and posted the materials online for free download. They have also conducted "train the trainer" sessions with construction professionals.

Source: NIOSH

Local company lands major international contract

Sensear, who launched its high-noise communication headsets five years ago, has negotiated a major deal with the US Marine Corps which it says validates their leadership position as a world class innovator in high noise communication technology solutions.

The organisation has joint headquarters in Perth and San Francisco and now has a sales office in Singapore.

Source: OHS online



THE VALUE OF EAR PLUG FIT TESTING CONFIRMED

Despite years of regulation, hours of training and billions of dispensed ear plugs, the incidence of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) in the workplace continues to rise worldwide.

In the European Union, NIHL is the most commonly reported occupational injury.

Determining if a worker is achieving real-world attenuation for their noise environment is therefore critical to the success of an occupational hearing conservation program.

The value of fit testing became evident in a field attenuation study conducted by the Howard Leight Acoustical Laboratories (USA) on the performance of hearing protection devices. Conducted on over 100 workers at eight different facilities, the study showed that one-third of workers achieved attenuation higher than the published attenuation for their ear plugs, and that another third achieved attenuation within 5dB of the published rating. But the lowest one-third of workers had attenuation that was more than 5dB below published attenuation.

The study then interviewed the workers who obtained high attenuation values to determine the common factors that contribute to good earplug fit, and hence good attenuation in use. Only one factor was found to be a consistent predictor of good fit: **one-on-one training**. That is, the more often a worker had received individual training in the proper use of hearing protectors, the higher the probability of a good fit. The same was not true for group training, such as watching annual training videos or passing out brochures.

The researchers highlight the importance of fit testing as a critical element of one-on-one employee training.

Additionally they point out that fit testing is an invaluable tool in reducing compensation claims for NIHL at the workplace. Fit testing records can help document that effective steps were taken to select appropriate hearing protectors, train workers in their proper use and to document a proper fit with a particular protection.

Source: HearForever

SICK WORKERS BURDEN THE ECONOMY

"Presenteeism" continues to burden Australia and cost the economy \$34 billion in 2009/10 according to research by independent economic consultancy KPMG Econtech.

"Presenteeism" is defined as when employees come to work but, due to illness or medical conditions, are not fully productive.

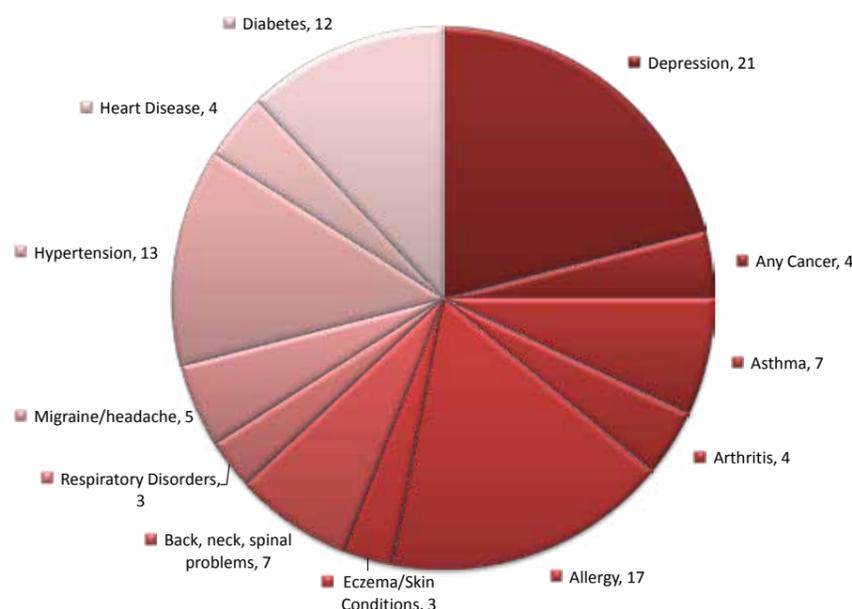
The condition has a high cost.

On average, 6.5 working days are lost per employee annually and the overall cost equates to a decrease in gross domestic product (GDP) of 2.7 per cent.

The Medibank-sponsored study considered 12 key medical conditions (see the graph).

The rate of "presenteeism" is expected to increase as the workforce ages.

Source: Medibank



Mental health and mining

The Australasian Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (ACRRMH) recently presented at a Department of Mines and Petroleum Roadshow. Dr Jennifer Bowers from ACRRMH estimated that one in three persons in mining and construction suffers mental illness each year. That means up to 160 minutes of a 12 hour shift could be unproductive. The 60% higher consumption of alcohol in rural and remote areas increases the problem.

It is estimated that presenteeism (at work but not "there") could account for seven and a half times the loss that absenteeism does. In FIFO operations one fifth of personnel leave in the first 12 months, and only 9% feel comfortable discussing issues about mental health at work.

In ACRRMH's view, one dollar invested now in mental health improvement returns nine dollars in the first year. Dr Jane Harte of ACRRMH noted that mental resilience is required to live a split lifestyle. One way of reaching out to those with problems is the toilet door poster, e.g. "This place is doing my head in", or "Telling me to harden the f... up doesn't help (Talking does). You can get help from ..."

Participants at the Roadshow responded with signs of recognition to the ACRRMH message. They presented ideas for more posters to promote the message. But the ACRRMH approach involves a lot more than that. It works with companies to build a full mental health strategy.

Workplace bullying complaints increase in Victoria

WorkSafe Victoria's health and safety director, Ian Forsyth, has released figures on employee bullying that show a tripling of complaints in one year. He links the increase to publicity over the prosecution of four men whose relentless bullying culminated in the death of a young waitress in 2006.

That incident prompted the introduction of laws (Brodie's Law) that made bullying at work a criminal offence in Victoria. However, Mr Forsyth says that most of the increased complaints are from people who identify the not uncommon personal tensions and slights – unpleasant as they are – as unlawful bullying.

Source: ABC News Online

WorkHealth checks in Victoria highlight health concerns

An analysis of 300,000 WorkHealth checks conducted in Victoria has revealed that although more than 80 per cent of participating workers rated their health from good to excellent, two thirds of the workers tested had a medium to high risk to type 2 diabetes and one in five had a medium to high risk for cardiovascular disease.

One in four Victorian workers had high cholesterol and nearly half the workers tested had a waist measurement which put them at an increased or greatly increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

Other findings:

- men were more than three times more likely than women to have intermediate or high risk of cardiovascular disease
- nearly one quarter of workers had elevated blood pressure, and this was twice as common in men than women
- 93% reported eating less than the daily recommended intake of fruit and vegetables
- 70% reported inadequate physical exercise; and
- 33 per cent reported risky alcohol consumption

The analysis was conducted by Monash University.

The conduct of WorkHealth checks in Victorian workplaces is just one of the initiatives that has taken that state to a position of leadership in workplace health and safety.

Source: safety solutions online

New drug offers hope in stroke fight

A new drug that improves on previous medications in preventing strokes was announced in a study presented recently at the European Society of Cardiology Congress.

The new drug, Apixaban, resulted in an additional 21 per cent relative reduction in stroke and systemic embolism compared to Warfarin said the study leader, Professor Granger.

Unlike Warfarin, Apixaban does not require constant monitoring to ensure the dosage remains within a desired range.

Source: The West Online

Optimism associated with lower risk of stroke

A positive outlook on life might lower your risk of having a stroke according to new research reported in the Journal of the American Heart Association.

Previous research has shown that low pessimism and temporary positive emotions are linked to lower stroke risk.

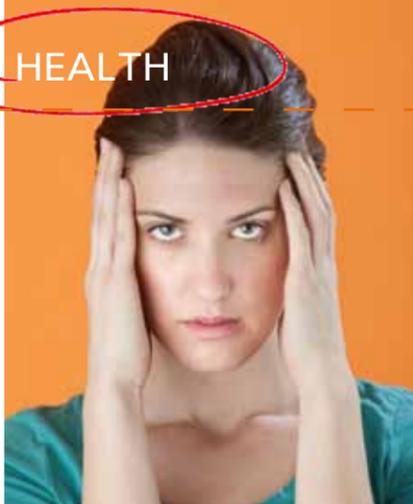
In an observational study conducted by the University of Michigan, a nationally representative group of 8,044 adults over the age of 50 years rated their optimism levels on a 16 point scale. Each point increase in optimism corresponded to a 9 per cent decrease in acute stroke risk over a two year follow up period.

The study lead author, Eric Kim, said that the work suggests that people who expect the best things in life actively take steps to promote health.

The study is the first to identify a correlation between optimism and stroke.

Source: ohs online





Depression found to increase risk of mortality in type 2 diabetes

Depression is a significant independent predictor of increased mortality and may increase the risk of subsequent macrovascular events in adults with type 2 diabetes.

The findings were based on a data analysis by researchers at HealthPartners Research Foundation in Minneapolis, USA who say that they underscore the importance of early detection and effective management of depression in people with type 2 diabetes.

Source: MedConnect

Women and depression

According to new research reported in the Journal of the American Heart Association, women who use anti-depressant medication, particularly selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, have a 39 per cent increased risk of stroke.

In six years of follow-up of women in the Nurses' Health Study, researchers found that a history of depression was associated with a 29 per cent increased risk of total stroke, even after considering other stroke risk factors. Women who used anti-depressant medication – particularly



serotonin uptake inhibitors – had a 39 per cent increased risk of stroke. Examples of these drugs are Prozac, Zoloft and Celexa.

Compared to women without a history of depression, depressed women were more likely to be single, smokers, and less physically active. They were also slightly younger, had a higher body mass index, and more co-existing conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

Source: OHS online, 14 August 2011

Mesothelioma cases on the increase

A sharp rise in new cases of mesothelioma is an unwelcome reminder that the fight to eradicate asbestos from our workplaces, homes and communities is far from over. The Safe Work Australia report "Mesothelioma in Australia" released in August advises that the annually number of new cases of mesothelioma increased by more than 10% in 2007 reversing the decreasing incidence reported from 2003-2006.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2006 that at least 90,000 worldwide die each year from asbestos-related diseases which is horrendous to contemplate.

Source: ACTU Release



Aging and mental health in the decade ahead: what psychologists need to know

As the sheer number of older adults continues to increase (one in five older adults has a mental disorder, such as dementia) the decade ahead will require an approximate doubling of the current level of psychologists' time with older adults.

To meet the needs of the aging population, psychologists need to increase awareness of competence for geropsychology practice and knowledge regarding dementia diagnosis, screening and services.

Demands are anticipated to grow in primary care, dementia and family caregiving services, decision-making capacity evaluation and end-of-life care.

Policy advocacy for geropsychology clinical services, education and research remains critical.

Source: APA PsycNET 26 September 2011

CHRONIC DISEASES THE WORLD'S LEADING KILLER

A report released in September by the World Health Organization (WHO) says that non-communicable diseases are the top cause of death worldwide killing more than 26 million people in 2008.

Cardiovascular diseases were responsible for 48 per cent of those deaths, cancers 21 per cent, chronic respiratory diseases 12 per cent and diabetes 3 per cent.

Figures for Australia follow the international pattern.

Australia has the capacity to address and respond to non-communicable diseases as measured by funding availability and having in place a national health reporting system and national population-based cancer registry.

However, it does not have in place an integrated or topic-specific policy program/action plan that is currently operational for:

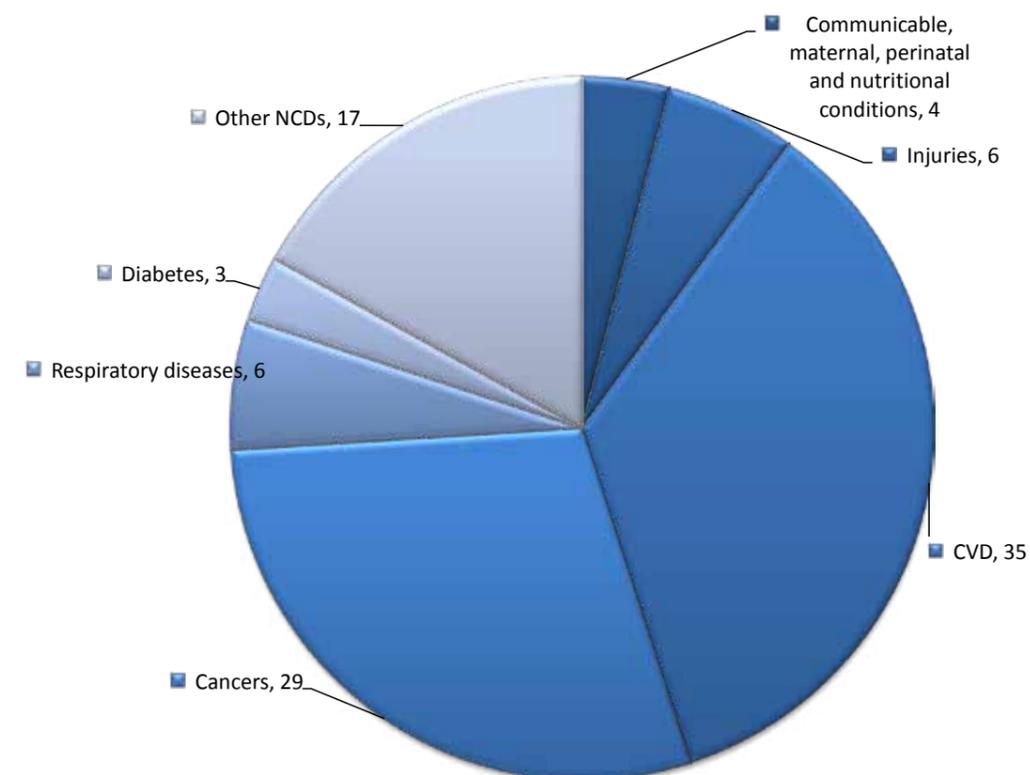
- cardiovascular disease
- chronic respiratory diseases
- diabetes

which are three of the diseases identified in the report as being major contributors to deaths from non-communicable diseases.

The WHO plans to issue an updated report in 2013. Perhaps these deficiencies will have been addressed by that time.

Source: WHO

Proportional mortality (% of total deaths, all ages)



NCDs are estimated to account for 90% of all deaths.

FOUR HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS LEAD TO A LONGER LIFE

According to a study by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention people can live longer if they practice one or more healthy lifestyle behaviours – not smoking, eating a healthy diet, getting regular physical activity and limiting alcohol.

During the study period, people who engaged in all four healthy behaviours were 63 per cent less likely to die early, compared to people who did not practice any of the behaviours. Not smoking provided the most protection from dying from all of the causes examined.

People who engaged in all four healthy behaviours were 66 per cent less likely to die early from cancer, 65 per cent less likely to die early from cardiovascular disease, and 57 per cent less likely to die early from other causes compared to people who did not engage in any of the healthy behaviours.

The study adds to the mounting evidence of the substantial gain in life associated with healthy behaviours, and underscores the need for the clinical and public health communities to work together to promote greater adoption of these behaviours.

Source: CDC

Keep workplace wellness initiatives and safety and health programs together

In a paper written by a taskforce from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine it is argued that employers can have a greater impact from their wellness programs if they are integrated into other safety and health initiatives.

Researchers said that many employers make the mistake of viewing their safety/health protection programs and workplace wellness programs as two distinct activities which they then separate into different 'silos'. Isolating these programs, however, may not be the most effective approach.

The authors state "both health protection and health promotion interventions are best achieved when they are working in concert."

The President and CEO of the American Institute of Preventive Medicine has pointed out that successful employee wellness programs receive an average return on investment of \$3.48 for every dollar spent due to reduced health care costs and \$5.82 for every dollar spent due to reduced absenteeism.

Source: EHS Today

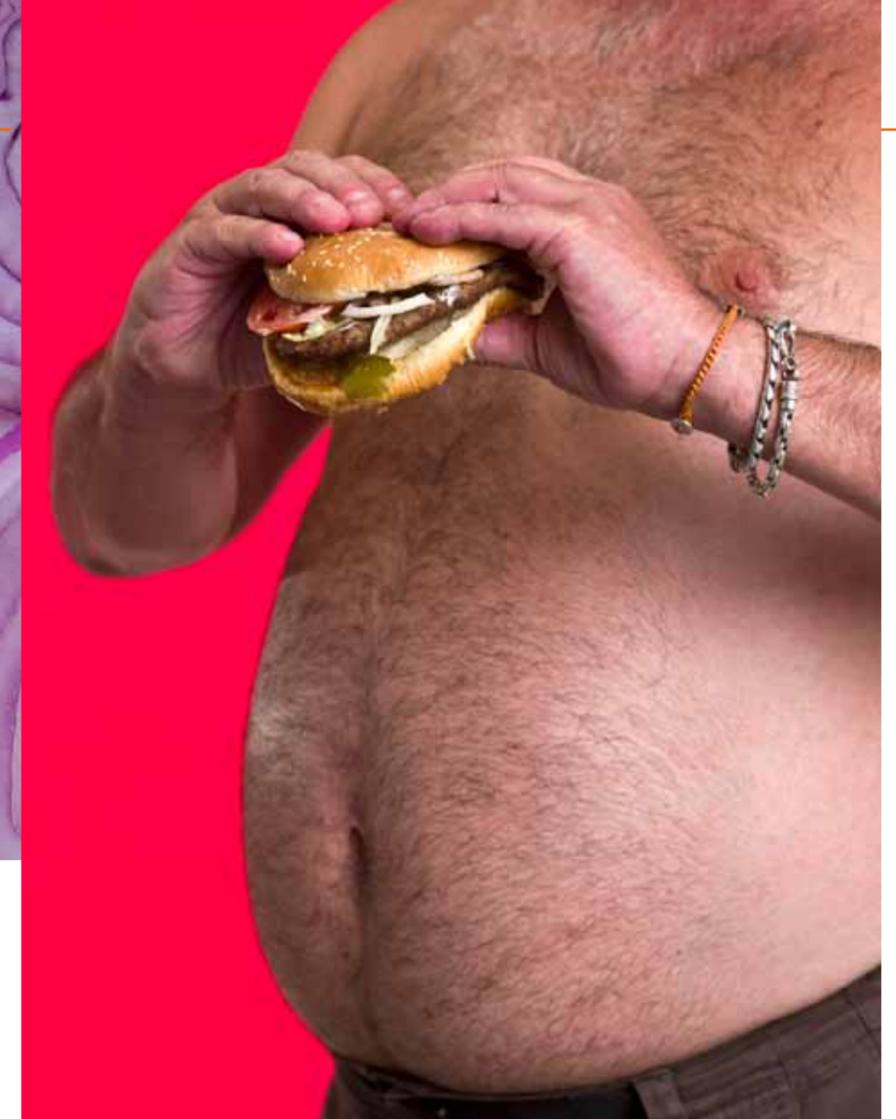
Obesity disrupts heartbeats

University of Adelaide research has shown for the first time that obesity directly causes electrical abnormalities of the heart.

Researcher Dr Hany Abed says that there is growing evidence that obesity changes the structure and size of the heart muscle and the way it works and contracts, as well as its electrical function. This leads to atrial fibrillation, the most common heart rhythm disorder in the world, affecting 10 per cent of people over 75 years of age.

Dr Abed says that the health sector estimates that two-thirds of the incidence of atrial fibrillation expected by 2020 will be solely due to obesity.

Source: Reuters



NSW government gets tough on obesity

The NSW Government is spending \$46m to promote healthy eating and curb obesity.

Medical experts and nutritionists want the government to go further and ban junk-food vending machines in workplaces calling them occupational health and safety hazards.

AMA federal president Dr Steve Hambleton said that the Association supported broadening lite food labelling and getting rid of junk food vending machines. We should also encourage people to bring their lunch from home.

Nutritionist Dr Rosemary Stanton says that the government should extend the lite food labelling from school canteens to workplaces.

Source: Safety in Australia

New research reveals the importance of slow wave (delta) sleep

Researchers from the Outcomes of Sleep Disorders in Older Men Study have found for the first time that poor quality sleep, reflected by reduced slow wave sleep, puts individuals at significantly increased risk of developing high blood pressure, and that this effect appears to be independent of the influence of breathing pauses during sleep.

Slow wave sleep (SWS), one of the deeper stages of sleep, is characterised by non-rapid eye movement from which it is difficult to awaken. It is represented by relatively slow synchronised brain waves, called **delta activity** on an electrocephalogram.

People with the lowest level of SWS had an 80 per cent increased risk of developing high blood pressure.

The study's author, Susan Redline MD, said that people should recognise that sleep, diet and physical activity are critical to health, including heart health and optimal blood pressure control. She added that poor sleep may be a powerful predictor for adverse health outcomes and initiatives to improve sleep may provide novel approaches for reducing hypertension burden.

Source: American Heart Association

Teamwork helps conquer occupational fatigue

According to a new study conducted by the London South Bank University individuals working together as a team display better problem-solving skills than those facing fatigue alone.

The study examined the problem solving skills of army officer cadets during a weekend training exercise. Cadets worked on a series of maths problems. Some were tested at the beginning of the training when they were rested, while others were tested at the end when they were exhausted from military drills, night watch duty and a lack of sleep.

The results showed that individual soldiers who were fatigued performed significantly worse on the tests than alert soldiers. Teams of cadets, on the other hand, performed just as well when they were tired as when they were alert.

Source: EHS Today 6 September 2011

The genetics of sleep personality

Circadian24/7 Workforce Solutions have made available on their website some useful information on what some companies are doing to improve shift worker performance and safety.

They conducted surveys of managers at 24 hour operations and asked them what strategies they found most effective for improving shift workers' performance and asked respondents to describe any programs or benefits specifically intended to improve the morale or health and safety of their shift workers.

The responses appear at their website www.circadian.com/pages/547_managing_24_7_7_shiftwork_alertness_tips.cfm

In another initiative Circadian have made available a quiz to enable viewers to self-assess their sleep personality.

Source: Circadian 24/7

Increasing evidence of the health consequences of long working hours

An Otago University (NZ) study of more than 1,000 people aged between 25-30 years has found a strategically significant link between the number of hours worked and alcohol abuse.

Individuals working 50 or more hours per week had rates of alcohol-related problems that were between 1.8 to 3.3 times higher than for individuals who were not employed for such long hours.

The study leader, Sheree Gibb, said increased alcohol abuse among those who worked long hours might be an attempt to reduce stress associated with their jobs. She also suspected that social contact with workmates might make people more likely to abuse alcohol. She concluded that there was a need for anti-alcohol programs targeting people who worked long hours.

Source: The West Australian, 10 August 2011



African visitors complete MARCSTA's health and safety induction

The second group of officials from various African countries completed MARCSTA's health and safety induction training in September; the first group completing the program in July.

The visitors representing mining industries and government departments from 14 African countries have been attending the WA School of Mines as part of a program organised through AusAID and Education and Training International.

In addition to spending time at Curtin University gaining an appreciation of the Australian political system and mining policies, the group visited a number of mining operations to gain some firsthand experience of the Australian resources industry.

Learning about health and safety standards and practices was an essential part of this process.

Mining industry leads the way in OHS training

Australian Social Trends statistics published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in June 2011 show that the prevalence of OHS training in the workforce was highest in the mining sector (93%) followed by the Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services industry (87%), Public Administration and Safety (84%) and Health Care and Social Assistance (84%).

The proportion of people receiving OHS training in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industries was very low (54%) despite the relatively high injury rate.

Source: Australian Social Trends June 2011

Industry response to introduction of mandatory induction in construction sector

A report in the July issue of the Journal of Health and Safety Research and Practice by researchers from Edith Cowan University has identified a generally positive response from industry to the introduction of mandatory safety induction training which reverses the considerable resistance to its introduction expressed in 2007.

The study findings show that:

- the commercial construction sector values the Induction Training and supports its mandatory nature. The induction has become an embedded feature of the industry's safety culture.
- the respondents believe that the training has not only increased their personal awareness but has contributed to a positive improvement in the safety culture on construction worksites.
- the training should be regularly refreshed to keep workers informed on legislative changes and changing construction processes.

There remains a concern, however, about on-line delivery and its adherence to quality standards required under the Australian Quality Training Framework compared to face-to-face methodology and in particular the training assessment.

Overall, stakeholders indicated that the introduction of mandatory pre-site safety training has been a significant driver in moving the safety culture of the industry forward.

Source: Determining Industry Response to the Construction Induction Training in WA, J Health & Safety Research & Practice, 3(1), 24-32

AROUND THE GLOBE



Japan

The cost of Japan's nuclear crisis

Six months after the 11 March earthquake and tsunami in Japan triggered reactor meltdowns, explosions and radiation leaks, the size and cost of the clean up task is becoming clear.

Contaminated zones where radiation levels need to be brought down could exceed 2,400 square kilometres.

Japan faces the prospect of removing and disposing of 29 million cubic metres of contaminated soil from an area nearly the size of Tokyo. The government has so far raised 220 billion yen for this.

Experts say the ultimate cleanup bill will reach trillions of yen.

Source: Reuters

Europe

Mental health issues – the largest health challenge of the 21st century?

According to a recent European study almost 165 million people or 38 per cent of the population suffer each

year from a brain disorder such as depression, anxiety, insomnia or dementia.

The study's authors claim that mental disorders have become Europe's largest health challenge of the 21st century.

They say that, at the same time, some big drug companies are backing away from investment in research on how the brain works and affects behaviour, putting the onus on governments and health charities to stump up funding for neuroscience.

The study findings are supported by a new American report published in September that shows that about half of US adults will develop a mental illness during their lifetime.

In Australia, research commissioned by Medibank Health Solutions to identify the key mental health issues being faced by rural and regional workers has revealed that 78 per cent believe that there is not enough support for those with mental health issues in their communities.

Depression, substance abuse and work related stress were identified as the most prevalent issues.

Source: SafetyinAustralia

Sweden

Time off for work exercise linked to increased productivity

A Swedish study in the August issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine reports that taking time out of the work week for an employee exercise program may lead to increased productivity, despite the reduction in work hours.

The productivity gains seem to result from higher output during work hours and fewer missed work days.

The study authors say that work hours may be used for health promotion activities with sustained or improved production levels, since the same, or higher production level can be achieved with lesser resources.

Source: OHS online

Scotland

Tiny particles in diesel fumes are harmful

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh have shown that tiny particles in diesel exhaust can increase the chances of a clot forming in blood vessels.

The study showed that the tiny 'nanoparticles' in diesel fumes – which are less than a millionth of a metre wide – stopped blood vessels from relaxing and contracting properly, a key part of keeping them free from disease.

Professor Jeremy Pearson from the British Heart Foundation said that the findings suggest that lives could be saved by cutting these harmful nanoparticles out of exhaust – perhaps by taking them out of the fuel, or making manufacturers add gadgets to their vehicles that can trap particles before they escape.

He added that the Foundation's advice remains the same – **people with heart disease should avoid spending long periods outside in areas where traffic pollution is likely to be high, such as on or near busy roads.**

Source: European Heart Journal

USA

Employees with legal concerns may suffer decreased work productivity

A 2011 Metlife study has found that employees facing legal issues e.g. debt, divorce, taxes, childcare, real estate etc could lose an average of three hours per week.

Another 2011 Metlife study found that most common legal issues faced by employees usually last between five and six weeks, with employees spending an average of three hours per week dealing with them.

The study also found that 37 per cent of men and 47 per cent of women said that their own personal legal issues **negatively impacted on their physical or emotional health, which further affects productivity in the workplace.**

It comes as no surprise that the legal profession is so attractive to young Americans.

Source: OHS Online

MSHA materials online only

The US Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) has advised that due to the escalating costs of hard copy mailing of compliance guidance, the agency is to discontinue the printing and mailing of guidance materials.

Compliance guidance will be available online.

Source: US Department of Labor

Canada

Falls from the same level not being addressed

Health and Safety Ontario reports that year after year, approximately one in every six lost time injuries results from same level falls and falls from height, as recorded in statistics published by the province's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

The provincial co-ordinator of the ministry's Industrial Health and Safety Program believes that employers may assign a higher priority to preventing falls from height than slip and trip related falls because they perceive the potential consequences to be greater. However, claim statistics show that:

- **falls from the same level outnumber falls from height by two to one**
- **both types of claims remain stable despite efforts to reduce them**

Source: Health and Safety Ontario

Denmark

In-depth and brief interventions for back pain show similar results

A group of researchers from Denmark conducted a review of 351 employees who missed 3-16 weeks of work because of low back pain.

They looked at employees suffering from low back pain, treated by a team of experts and assigned a case manager, who collaborated on a comprehensive rehabilitation plan with the experts and patients. These employees did not show better results than employees who received a brief intervention consisting of a clinical examination and advice offered by a rehabilitation physician and a physiotherapist.

The researchers concluded that hospital-based multidisciplinary intervention may be no better than brief intervention to increase return to work and improve health in sick-listed employees with low back pain.

Source: EHS Today

Italy

Asbestos mega-trial

A court in Turin, Italy has requested gaol terms of 20 years against the former owner and top shareholder of a construction firm in the biggest ever trial over asbestos-related deaths.

The trial is a mass civil action in which some 6,000 people are seeking damages over the deaths of around 3,000 people who worked at or lived near the firm's plants in Italy.

The prosecution requested the maximum sentence of 12 years imprisonment and demanded that eight more years be added on the grounds that asbestos can trigger ailments decades after exposure.

The pair are accused of an environmental disaster and failing to comply with labour safety regulations.

A verdict could be handed down at the end of the year.

Source: HSE



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Donelle Fraser (C) (O) (R)	Micheal White
Rhonda Gilchrist (S only)	Paul Willoughby
Ross Graham	
Brett Green	
Paul Harring	

All training providers listed provide the General Safety Induction program.

C denotes the Work Safely in the Construction Industry program.
 O denotes the OHS for Supervisors and Managers program.
 S denotes the Extended Working Hours program.
 R denotes Conduct Local Risk Control program
 U denotes the Underground program.



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