



Suite 5 Petroleum House  
12 Brodie-Hall Drive  
Technology Park  
Bentley 6102  
Western Australia

Telephone 08 9355 1400  
Facsimile 08 9355 1499  
Email [safety@marcsta.com](mailto:safety@marcsta.com)  
[www.ohswa.marcsta.com](http://www.ohswa.marcsta.com)

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (WA BRANCH)

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASES WORKING GROUP

#### Notes from the meeting of 15 August 2013

##### **General discussion:**

- Mental health claims are beginning to impact on business.
- The need to recognise that it is not easy to identify whether the workplace or home environment and the source of the mental health concerns; they are often connected.
- The social disconnect resulting from the rapid development and availability of electronic equipment.
- The importance of recognising that most persons are employed in the small business sector; much of the focus in public discussion/comment is on big business employees, where the problems attract attention.
- The need to think about the mental health concerns outside the workers' compensation area where, in fact, the research shows 70% of the affected persons are.
- The continuing inability of workers to broach the subject of mental health with supervisors or management who are not trained to deal with the problem. In many cases management have similar problems.
- The limitations of general practitioners who are invariably under pressure and who may lack experience or be reluctant to issue certificates for mental diseases.

##### **Matters identified for consideration at a seminar/conference:**

- Genuine recognition of the incidence and range of causative factors and the range of issues both in the workplace and at home.
- Coverage of all forms of psychological diseases.
- Identification of all available services/facilities to provide assistance.

- The essential encouragement of people affected to take steps to address the problem i.e. remove the stigma (VIP).
- Why the male-female differentiation in workers' compensation claim numbers? Does this exist also outside the workers' compensation system?
- Identifying other models for the treatment for mental disease claims outside the compensation channel.
- Acknowledging that behaviour in society is a significant contributing factor e.g. bullying, harassment, violence, discourtesy etc.

It was recognised that all concerned disciplines be involved and that the focus of many of the initiatives to date has been on management/supervision when the real need is to educate ordinary people.

### **Suggestions for topics/speakers:**

- The involvement of a speaker to provide a wide societal coverage.
- Speakers representing from all related disciplines (psychology, psychiatry, therapist, GPs etc)
- The involvement of the ISCRR, Monash University Victoria, who have issued guidelines for employers (based on the Canadian Standard). PBG to make contact with them.