

**Electronic news bulletin of the Cochrane Occupational Health Field
May 2008**

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1. EU Framework 7 project: The Economic dimension of Occupational Safety and Health Workshops

See www.ecosh.eu for further information and details of how to register for the workshops.

Occupational Safety and Health is at the heart of economics. It is generally assumed that a healthy workforce in safe workplaces is more productive and uses less social and health care expenses. This is even more important in Europe with an aging workforce. Therefore, the EU has granted a subsidy for a concerted action on the economic dimension of occupational health and safety as part of its seventh research framework programme.

The aim of the action of ECOSH is to bring together researchers, employers, unions, policymakers and other stakeholders. In three workshops they will discuss new and innovative ways of using economics for occupational safety and health. Workshops will be prepared by a group of experts in the area. The following workshops will be organised:

1. The impact of OSH and OSH interventions on company performance
Helsinki, Finland, 23 and 24 January 2009
2. Economic evaluation of OSH interventions
Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 8 and 9 May 2009
3. Economic incentives for the uptake of OSH measures
Lodz, Poland, 27 and 28 November 2009

There will be a limited number of places available for the various stakeholders.

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2. Recently published occupational health reviews
 - 2.1. Prevention of injuries in agriculture

Plain language summary

Occupational injury rates among farmers are high. Many prevention programs and laws have been introduced as injury control strategies in this field, but the effectiveness of many of these strategies in reducing injuries is still unknown.

A systematic literature search was conducted to find studies on interventions to reduce occupational injuries in agriculture. Eight studies were found from over 8600 references. The quality of the relevant studies was assessed and their results extracted. Randomised controlled trial data were combined across studies in a meta-

analysis. Interrupted time series studies were reanalysed to assess if there was a change in the level or trend of injuries associated with the intervention.

Five randomised controlled trials with 11,565 participants and one interrupted time series study with 14 measurement points used combinations of various educational interventions and financial incentives. Two of these studies concentrated on injury prevention among children or adolescents and the rest dealt with injury prevention among adults. The effect of legislation was evaluated in two interrupted time series studies with on average 32.5 measurement points. One study evaluated regulations to prevent tractor rollover injuries in Sweden and another study evaluated regulation to reduce fatal pesticide poisonings in Sri Lanka. The methodological quality was rated as less than high for all included studies.

The studies provided no evidence that the educational interventions had an injury reducing effect. However, insurance premium discounts as a financial incentive decreased injuries claims in one study. Specific legislative mandates expanding the use of Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors were not associated with a reduction of injuries in one study. Legislation to ban Endosulfan pesticides was associated with a reduction in fatal poisonings in the long term in another study.

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3. Current status of reference databases

There are presently 1131 references of occupational health and safety intervention studies (975 original research studies and 156 reviews) in our database. The original articles have been divided into two separate databases: EBM studies contains all the randomised controlled trials, controlled clinical trials and interrupted time-series studies (500 references), whereas BA studies contains all the methodologically poorer quality before-after studies (475 references).

If you haven't already used the database, it is accessible free of charge through our website at www.cohf.fi after a short registration procedure. There is also a user manual provided at the website. Remember that we provide only reference data and not full text articles because of copyrights reasons. We do however categorise the studies according to study type and outcomes measured so that you can look, for example, for RCTs about occupational back pain (search: rct-study/All non-indexed text fields AND "back pain" All indexed text fields). There are currently 32 of those. All references gathered from MEDLINE are linked to PubMed where some, but not all, have a link to full text versions. If you have trouble with accessing our database then please let us know. We will do our best to effect a rapid remedy.

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4. Reminder of COHF search strategies and how to use them

Lists of search terms that have been developed and combined according to a specific logic are commonly referred to as search strategies. The COHF website currently contains our tried and tested most sensitive and most specific strategies for finding occupational health intervention studies in MEDLINE. We use the most sensitive one for trawling MEDLINE for additions to our reference database. We also provide several strategies customised to particular topics like back pain and psychological stress and the general strategy used in all Cochrane reviews for finding randomised controlled trials. Each of these can be copied and pasted into MEDLINE and combined with your own search terms. Please let us know if you think a particular topic should be covered with its own strategy or if you have a strategy that others could use.

We aim to progress by adding on the list a template search strategy that will be designed for more extended use and which will allow the users to insert the search words appropriate for their health problems of interest. We intend to have this function available later this year.

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5. Conferences with contributions from the Cochrane Occupational Health Field

The 11th biennial conference of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) held in Helsinki, Finland, 23-28 June. www.congreszon.fi/eahil_2008

The 18th World Congress on Safety and health at Work held in Seoul, South Korea, June 29 - July 2. www.safety2008korea.org

The 16th Cochrane Colloquium held in Freiburg, Germany, 3-7 October. www.colloquium.info

The 29th ICOH International Congress on Occupational Health held in Cape Town, South Africa, 22-27 March 2009. www.icoh2009.co.za

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6. Next issue of the COHF Newsletter

The next issue of the COHF Newsletter will be published in October-November 2008.

If you would like to inform the recipients of this newsletter about important matters (e.g. conferences, publications, job vacancies, etc.) please submit your items to the editor at: jani.ruotsalainen@ttl.fi and include "COHF Newsletter" on the subject line. Unless you request otherwise, your submissions to the COHF Newsletter may be duplicated in other regular Cochrane Collaboration news channels such as Cochrane News and the Cochrane Collaboration web site, at the discretion of the editors. Please consider the environment before printing this newsletter.

Kind regards,
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