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EAOHP Rome conference: special session

A special session will take place on the first day of the forthcoming EAOHP conference, which will be held in Rome on 29-31 March 2010. The session is being organised by the Italian National Institute for Occupational Safety & Prevention (ISPESL). All delegates will be welcome to attend.

The management of psychosocial risks

The special session is expected to provide a forum for exchange of views on potential strategies for the management and assessment of psychosocial risks at the national level. The importance of stress is reflected in European occupational health and safety policies, which take into account the need to manage and assess it. In compliance with European regulations, Italian legislation on health and safety at

work acknowledges work-related stress as a work-related risk and stresses the duty of employers to enlarge the risk assessment area to all risks arising from work-related stress.

The first part of the session will present examples of successful experiences in the management of psychosocial risks of some European countries such as the UK, Ireland and Norway, as well as the perspectives of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) on psychosocial risk management.

In the second part of the session presentations will focus on cases from Italy, followed by a round table discussion of all the issues raised. The session will include the involvement of experts and representatives from the trades unions, employers, regions and government institutions, and will aim to promote a participative and collaborative approach to addressing the issue.

Simultaneous translation for the session will be provided in English and Italian.

Conference registration still open

Discounts are available for students and delegates from developing countries. Registration is available until 25th March 2010



Above: St Peter's Square seen from the roof of St Peter's Basilica, Rome. The conference venue is adjacent to the square, to the right of the picture. Image: David Paul Ohmer

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Editorial

Welcome to the first Academy newsletter of 2010. We are pleased to lead with details of the Academy's conference in Rome later this month (29th to 31st March). Registration for the conference is still open, closing on the 25th March. You can find further details of the conference, including discounts available for students, on the conference website:

<http://eaohp.org/conference.aspx>

A regular feature of the newsletter is an interview with a leading figure in the field of OHP. Our latest interviewee is Marc Van Veldhoven from the Department of Human Resource Studies at the University of Tilburg, The Netherlands. Marc shares with us his route into the field including his years in practice, and his current work in human resource management, occupational health and psychological flexibility. We are grateful for the time Marc spent in being interviewed and hope you enjoy reading about his work.

This issue's "Across the pond" piece presents an interview with Bob Sinclair (Clemson University, South Carolina). In addition to sharing his work history and current research interests, Bob describes his vision of the future of OHP and the need for better intervention research, a greater understanding of temporal factors in OHP research, more refined theoretical models, and more research with marginalised groups such as small businesses.

We are pleased to present a piece of original collaborative research between the Institute of Work, Health and Organisations, Nottingham University, UK (Jonathan Houdmont and Stavroula Leka) and the Department of Psychology, Quinnipiac University, USA (Carrie Bulger). This work, entitled, "Identifying core curriculum areas in occupational health psychology", presents survey data exploring expert opinion on the ideal core areas for an OHP curriculum. I am sure this paper will be of interest to both educators and practitioners alike.

In News items we are pleased to include information of plans to award the fellowship of the Academy to Cary Cooper and Wilmar Schaufeli. The Academy's College of Fellows now boasts 12 occupational health psychologists and is testament to the contributions of these individuals to our field. This month we also carry our usual news from *Work & Stress*, including details of a major review of the last ten years' research using the Karasek Job Demand-Control model.

We hope that you enjoy the latest edition of our newsletter. We welcome submissions for the summer issue. (See the call for material on the back page).

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Marc van Veldhoven is Associate Professor in the Department of Human Resource Studies at the University of Tilburg, The Netherlands. He specialises in human resource management, well being and performance. Marc, together with Theo Meijman, published the VBBA questionnaire on the experience and evaluation of work, which is widely used in the Netherlands. Here Marc answers some questions about himself and his department.

Marc van Veldhoven

How did you first become interested in OHP and what are your current interests?

This must have been before the field as such even existed. When I studied psychology in the 1980s, I combined a major in clinical and health psychology/physiological psychology with selected courses in personality psychology and work & organizational psychology. At the time there were not yet any specific OHP courses available.

My first job (1987-1997) was in one of the Netherlands' larger occupational health services. Occupational medicine, hygiene and safety were the recognized disciplines there. In order to profile my own discipline better, I became more directly interested in OHP, a field of research and practice that was in its beginning stages at the time.

After a period of 15 years in occupational health care practice and research I got a bit frustrated with the small amount of follow-up that organizations were giving to our well-designed research efforts and interventions. There always appeared to be other, more important strategic priorities. This is how I got interested in human resource management (HRM), especially strategic HRM (SHRM). My current involvement with OHP is an attempt to bridge the areas of SHRM and OHP in research. My research is targeted at work factors in relation to both individual health and organizational performance.

Tell us about your department

The department of HR Studies at Tilburg University is a multidisciplinary group of researchers dedicated to the study of HRM and work systems, in relation to well-being and performance. The group was founded 20 years ago and has built a strong educational reputation in The Netherlands. Five years ago our

department started to aim for a wider research reputation and a more international profile. By now we have made good progress in these areas.

The department employs 25 people, and there are plenty of good researchers to collaborate with. These include, amongst others, Jaap Paauwe and Paul Boselie (SHRM), Rob Poell and Marianne van Woerkom (HRD), and René Schalk and Marloes van Engen (organisational behaviour). In addition, Patrick Wright (Cornell University/Ithaca USA) and Riccardo Peccei (King's College London, UK) hold rotating chairs in the department.

In my own research I am interested in work-related recovery, especially need for recovery and recovery opportunities (Van Veldhoven & Sluiter, 2009). I use a large database built by the Dutch occupational health services, as well as nationally representative samples from the Dutch workforce (Van Veldhoven et al., 2002; Van Veldhoven & Broersen, 2003). In another line of work, I collaborate with my colleagues to research the possible contribution to HRM of individual characteristics such as psychological flexibility and employee proactivity (Dorenbosch, 2009).

Finally, I also collaborate with my colleagues to study the links between HRM, well-being and performance. We do this using cross-sectional data from the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS), which is a UK national survey of people at work, and longitudinal data from a large financial services organization in the Netherlands Van de Voorde, 2010).

What do you think has been your biggest contribution to OHP?

The contribution I have been most involved with is

the design and implementation of a system supporting the assessment of psychosocial job conditions and occupational well-being in the Netherlands and Belgium. By now, over 10,000 measurement and intervention projects have been carried with this questionnaire, benchmark and analysis system. About a million Dutch and Belgian workers are estimated to have participated. An office of 25 people in Amsterdam is facilitating the process of data collection, analysis and reporting with the Questionnaire Experience and Evaluation of Work (QEEW; Vragenlijst Beleving en Beoordeling van de Arbeid –VBBA in Dutch) that underlies the system.

I believe that as a result, in a lot of these projects good results have been achieved for the participating workers and organizations, in terms of improved working conditions and reduced job strain. These results may not always have out-balanced economic or technological pressures, but I am sure that there has been an impact. I am really proud of having played my part in this. However it is something that only a whole generation of applied researchers and professionals together could have established. As a result, managing psychosocial factors and well-being at work has become a normal activity, and occupational health care services are recognized as an important advisor in this area.

As time goes on I believe we will become better and better at studying the complicated balance and trade-offs between societal-level politics, organization-level management and performance, and individual-level work and well-being (including health). We are formulating the theory base, are collecting the necessary data, and are developing the statistical methods involved in such “HR studies” (Croon & van Veldhoven, 2007).

Which key texts do you think are of most value to students of OHP?

We have a very nice introductory textbook for OHP in the Netherlands edited by Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker, *De psychologie van arbeid en gezondheid (The psychology of work and health)*. I think such a book could be important to popularize the field even further, also to a non-academic, professional audience. Once you go to the masters and academic level in OHP, I guess the field has become so large as to make general recommendations to read one specific text useless. I personally owe a lot to reading Karasek and Theorell's 1990 book *Healthy Work*. It has been a much more inspiring source to me than a simple, standard presentation of the DCS model would lead one to expect.

What advice would you give to those early in their career in Occupational Health Psychology?

If you have the opportunity and can find the time, visit a lot of different organizations at the beginning of your career so that you develop a first-hand feel of psychosocial job conditions in organizations early on. If you can support your impressions with data, that's even better. Every client (whether an individual or an organization) will believe they are unique. This is true and important to acknowledge, but only to a certain extent. Your first-hand impressions of multiple organizations will help you later to keep on track with whatever you want to achieve in a certain context, and to avoid getting lost in the clients' unique story.

What are the current issues of importance in OHP and in what direction do you see OHP going in the future?

The context of working conditions and job strain is often overlooked in OHP. We tend to start with the given psychosocial job conditions and stop with the long-term health consequences for individual employees. However, these job conditions are not happening in a vacuum. Similarly, health consequences and social legitimacy issues of job strain do not stop at the individual level. I hope we will learn more about the multilevel nature of these issues, and based on this multi-level evidence can be of better service to individuals, organizations and society alike.

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Academy to honour Cary Cooper and Wilmar Schaufeli

Two leading researchers from the field of occupational health psychology are to be awarded Fellowships by the European Academy later this month. The outstanding contributions to the discipline made by Cary Cooper (University of Lancaster, UK) and Wilmar Schaufeli (Utrecht University, The Netherlands) will be recognised in a ceremony during the Academy's conference in Rome. This takes to 12 the number of occupational health psychologists who have been inducted into the Academy's College of Fellows since its establishment a decade ago. The College exists to recognise the significant impact of key individuals on the evolution, development, and perpetuation of occupational health psychology. Like their predecessors, each is an internationally-recognised leader in the field.

Cary Cooper is a leading expert on work-related stress. He is a Director and founder of Robertson

Cooper Ltd, Professor of Organisational Psychology and Health and Pro Vice Chancellor at Lancaster University, UK. He has authored/edited over 100 books and authored or co-authored just short of a colossal 400 scholarly articles in academic journals.

Wilmar Schaufeli is Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and an active consultant in the field of occupational health psychology. He is internationally renowned for his seminal research on work-related well-being, especially workaholism, burnout and (more recently) the "positive" aspects of occupational health psychology, such as work engagement.

Please join us in congratulating Cary and Wilmar in Rome. Details of the award presentation schedule will be published in the conference programme.

European Survey of Enterprises on New & Emerging Risks (ESENER)

The European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (EU-OSHA) will be holding a special session at the Academy's forthcoming conference in Rome. It will only be open to specially invited participants. These include representatives of the World Health Organisation, the International Labour Organization, the European Commission and European and international OHP experts.

In EU-OSHA's European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), both managers' and workers' health and safety representatives were asked about the way health and safety risks are managed at their workplace, with a particular focus on psychosocial risks.

In spring 2009 a total of 28,649 managers and 7,226 health and safety representatives were interviewed in the 31 countries covered: the EU-27 as well as Croatia, Turkey, Switzerland and Norway. Developed with the support of governments and social partners at European level, ESENER aims to assist workplaces across Europe to deal more effectively with health and

safety and to provide policy makers with cross-nationally comparable information relevant to the design and implementation of new policies. As well as looking at management practices, ESENER explores in detail how workers are involved in the management of safety and health at work, which is an important factor in the successful implementation of preventive measures at workplace level.

The Session

In the first part of the session, results of the ESENER survey will be presented to participants, both in relation to occupational health and safety management and to psychosocial risk management. During the second part, the work carried out recently on psychosocial issues by EU-OSHA will be summarised and discussed as the starting point to ask for the views of policy-makers and experts on which future direction EU-OSHA's work in this field should take.

Further information can be obtained from: <http://esener.eu>,

Major review: A further decade of demands and control

by Toon Taris, Scientific Editor, *Work & Stress*

The first issue of the 24th volume of *Work & Stress*, which will be published shortly, will contain a collection of strong papers. Although all of these will be of interest, notable is the review study by Jan Häusser, Andreas Mojzisch, Miriam Niesel and Stefan Schulz-Hardt from the Georg-August University of Göttingen. As a follow-up to several highly-cited reviews on Robert Karasek's seminal Demand-Control model (most notably, the study by Margot van der Doef and Stan Maes that we published in 1999), the authors have reviewed research using the Karasek model that has appeared in over the last decade.

Based on a large number of high-quality studies, Häusser and colleagues have been able to draw strong conclusions with respect to the Demand-Control model. Fortunately, the authors confirm earlier insights on the adverse effects of high demands, low control and low support on worker well-being. However, they found that support for the effects of job characteristics on health was lower in longitudinal than in cross-sectional research, suggesting that the associations between job characteristics and well-being may partly be due to reciprocal causation – that is, worker health may affect job characteristics.

Finally, whereas the evidence for an interaction between demands and control was overall weak, it appeared to be stronger when demands and control tapped qualitatively similar job aspects.

Häusser et al.'s review is a fine example of how scientific knowledge accumulates across time. Rather than presenting spectacular but often difficult to replicate findings, it offers a traditional, yet intelligent and nuanced integration of past findings on an important subject. At the same time it indicates where the promising areas for future research on the relations between job characteristics and well-being lie. These include (i) the interaction between the worker and their job: whereas the work environment affects worker's well-being, workers are

not just passive recipients of environmental influences; and (ii) the fact that job characteristics may jointly determine well-being, but these joint effects are much more intricate than previously envisaged, requiring sophisticated theorizing and refined empirical inquiry. This paper provides information we can build on, and we are exceedingly happy to publish it.

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Forthcoming papers in Work & Stress Volume 24 part 1 (2010) :

- Are workers in high-status jobs healthier than others? Assessing Jahoda's latent benefits of employment in two working populations. Batinic, B., Selenko, E., Stiglbauer, B., & Paul, K. I.
- A trickle-down model of abusive supervision and moderators of these relationships. Rafferty, A. E., Restubog, S. L. D., & Jimmieson, N. L.
- Is there a relationship between major depression and both objective assessed and perceived job demand and job control? Rau, R., Morling, K., & Rösler, U.
- Ten years on: A review of recent research on the Job Demand-Control (-Support) Model and psychological well-being. Häusser, J. A., Mojzisch, A., Niesel, M., & Schulz-Hardt, S. (2010).
- Job Insecurity and Employee Health: The Buffering Potential of Job Control and Job Self-Efficacy. Schreurs, B., van Emmerik, IJ. H., Notelaers, G., & De Witte, H. (2010).

To view the papers in this latest edition when *Work & Stress* is published, visit our web site

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/tf/02678373.html> and click on *Online Contents*.

To receive an email alert when this edition is published, use the link above and click on the *Table of Contents Alerting* link in the middle of the page. You may first need to register or sign in.

Interview with Bob Sinclair

Robert R. Sinclair is an Associate Professor of Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Clemson University, South Carolina. Bob is a Founding Member and Past President of the Society for Occupational Health Psychology and is a core planning group member for the biannual Work Stress and Health conference series. He serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *Journal of Management* as well as on the Safety and Occupational Health Study Section of the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). His research investigates occupational health issues faced by military personnel, retail workers, and nurses.



How did you first become interested in occupational health psychology?

I was drawn to Industrial/Organizational psychology because of its practical orientation toward making workers' lives better. In 1990, during my first year of graduate school at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, I found my way on to Lois Tetrick's research team working on a project related to union commitment and later on to research that I thought of at the time as loosely focused on quality of work life issues. My first true occupational health project

Bob Sinclair will be presenting a keynote address at the forthcoming European Academy conference in Rome. In this edition's "Across the Pond" feature he shares with us his thoughts on OHP and talks about his career, interests in OHP and work being conducted in his department.

involved job stress in the unlikely sample of morticians (many bad jokes were told). Over time, my interest in unions and labour issues evolved into a focus on stress and health issues as well as various aspects of the employment relationship and the organization of work. We did not have a course in occupational health, or even in work stress, and many of my interests evolved after graduating and holding my first job at the University of Tulsa. I began to strongly identify myself as focused on occupational health psychology when I moved to Portland State University and began working with Leslie Hammer to create our OHP training program.

What are your current activities and in which area of OHP are you most interested?

I think of my research as organized by occupation, rather than by a particular theoretical issue. Nearly all of my research focuses on nurses, retail workers, and the military. Each of these occupations employs many people around the world and offers many unique and interesting occupational health challenges. I have studied unionized retail workers with Jim Martin at Wayne State University since I was in graduate school. Our work has addressed a wide array of issues including union-related attitudes and behaviour, part-time work, safety climate, and turnover/retention. Most recently, we have been focusing on non-standard work schedules and economic stressors as important considerations for retail workers.

With nurses, I am just finishing a large data collection effort on nurses' occupational health and retention with my former colleague Cynthia Mohr of Portland State University and several graduate students. There are many facets to this work, but one of the most interesting has been some mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) research exploring the positive features of work that contribute to engagement above

and beyond work stressors. Another interesting issue concerns the effects of staffing demands on nurses' quality of work life. Staffing demands are a multifaceted stressor for nurses, including issues such as having insufficient personnel, having the right number of people but not the right skill mix, and having nurses being moved from unit to unit during a shift, which creates problems for both them and their colleagues who remain. We have been studying how staffing demands may exacerbate the effects of other stressors at work, such as performance constraints and incivility.

Finally, with regard to the military, I have a relatively new program of research examining how different styles of leadership affect mental health, including some projects with another former colleague, Mo Wang, who is now at the University of Maryland, and some other projects with researchers at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. Both of these streams of research examine destructive and supportive leadership and our preliminary findings show some links to mental and physical health outcomes not traditionally studied in the leadership literature. This research excites me as it shows some of the potential links between topics traditionally regarded as "organizational" psychology (or preventative health) territory and topics traditionally regarded as the domain of "clinical" psychology and treatment-based approaches. I think there is a huge need for research bridging the link between these two disciplines and I am excited about the future opportunities for this work.

How did your department evolve?

I am new to my department, having just started my second year at Clemson. So, I am just getting settled and still learning our department history. However, I can tell you that our occupational health program is a certificate in Occupational Health Psychology. Clemson has had some long-standing faculty interests in topics related to health and organizational psychology. In fact, Clemson was one of the early recipients of the American Psychological Association – National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health grant program to stimulate graduate course development in occupational health psychology. That program helped support the construction of our OHP certificate program – one that continues to attract great doctoral students in Industrial/Organizational and Human Factors Psychology.

How big is your department, and who are the leading researchers and their projects?

Our department consists of approximately 18 faculty members, depending on how you count them. We have doctoral programs in Industrial/Organizational

Psychology and Human Factors Psychology. My colleagues who focus on occupational health research include James McCubbin, who specializes in health psychology (and who was recently selected as a fellow of the American Psychological Association), Tom Britt, a social/organizational psychologist who is noted for his work on engagement, morale and related topics in the military, and June Pilcher, who specializes in human factors and fatigue issues. Many of my other colleagues conduct research that is either directly or indirectly related to occupational health (such as cyber-bullying, positive psychology, PTSD, and transportation safety) and it has been gratifying to be in a department where many of my colleagues share an interest in health concerns.

Could you describe some of the OHP projects with which your department is currently involved?

Well, I addressed quite a few above! We mostly tend to work on our own projects, rather than collectively. For me personally, like many readers of this newsletter, I probably have more going on than I can effectively manage! Some of the specific papers and projects I am currently working on include a quasi-experimental study examining the benefits of participation in an expressive writing program with nurses, a paper in which we apply organizational justice literature to work schedule management and describe the development and validation of a measure of work-schedule justice, and several upcoming studies examining economic stressors. I look forward to describing some of the economic stress research in my keynote address at the upcoming EAOHP conference in Rome.

Where do you see your department going in the future?

We are in the process of discussing that very question! I expect that our certificate program will continue to develop over time and I hope to play an influential role in that effort. I confess to being a bit unsure about the wisdom of developing more "stand-alone" training programs in occupational health psychology, but it is something we are definitely considering. I have talked with many people about this over the last couple of years and I think there are definitely strong points to be made in favour of such programs and equally strong arguments that such programs might be premature.

What do you think has been the biggest contribution of OHP?

This is a hard question! I think I would have to say that the most important contribution of OHP has been the accumulated body of scientific evidence

demonstrating the multiple consequences of psychosocial demands at work for workers and their families (i.e., physical and mental health outcomes) in conjunction with research showing that the failure to address these demands leads to personal, social and economic costs for workers, families, employers, and society-at-large.

What are the current issues of importance in OHP?

Another hard question! I think the first thing that comes to mind for everyone would be the need for more and better research on occupational health interventions. I agree with this need from a scientific perspective, but I also have increasingly come to believe that social policy changes are needed to drive such research. A good example in the United States would be how civil rights legislation related to discrimination led to massive leaps forward in developing empirically-supported personnel selection systems. I will confess to knowing less about the specifics in Europe, but I think that on both sides of the Atlantic, we share a need for stronger legislation to protect workers and for more resources devoted to actually enforcing the legislation that is already on the books. Our continued effort to establish the business case for occupational health is important but may be insufficient to take OHP to the next level as a discipline.

In terms of more theoretical/scientific issues, a couple of issues come to mind. First, I think that we need a better understanding of the role of time in occupational health research. As one example, consider the two-wave longitudinal study. Despite an increasingly large body of research using longitudinal designs, it strikes me that the field has no concrete guidance for choosing the right time frame for such a study, particularly in terms of how the choice of time frame might be guided by the constructs under investigation. When should that time frame be an hour, a day, a week, a month, or a year? Under what conditions is a one-year time frame too long, too short, or just right?

Second, I think we need to get away from the idea of theoretical frameworks as one bucket of vaguely similar predictor variables (e.g., stressors) being linked to another bucket of vaguely similar outcome variables (e.g., occupational health outcomes). As a reviewer for journals, I encounter too many papers that include a large list of loosely related variables, particularly on the outcome side of the equation. In

personnel psychology, they refer to this issue as the "criterion problem" and recognized that more thoughtful conceptualization and operationalization of outcomes was essential to develop the field. I think we have the same kinds of problem in OHP; we need more refined models that lead to specific predictions about predictor-outcome relationships. Jan de Jonge's work on the triple match principle is a good example of one direction for such research. There are, of course, many others.

Third, I think we need a better understanding of occupational health issues in low income/entry level workers and small businesses. Much of the research in OHP and organizational psychology quite sensibly uses samples that are easy to get such as college students, members of large organizations, or members of a profession. The models developed out of research on such populations may not generalize to lower income workers in western nations and almost certainly would not generalize to workers in developing countries. However, I believe that at least some of the critical differences are "knowable" and we can develop models that make specific predictions about OHP-related processes for workers in these various socio-economic strata.

In what direction do you see OHP going in the future?

OHP will play an increasingly important role in workers' health. It will continue to be successful at attracting professionals who are interested in organizational issues, but who really care about worker health first and foremost. New OHP organizations (both formal and informal) are sprouting up around the world, and I believe the future of the professional organizations is quite bright.

Which key texts do you think are of most value to students of OHP?

I certainly would start with the *Handbook of Occupational Health Psychology* (edited by James Quick and Lois Tetrick) and the leading journals (*Journal for Occupational Health Psychology* and *Work & Stress*). There are several other key texts depending on the topic of interest. Examples include the *Handbook of Work Stress* (edited by Julian Barling, Kevin Kelloway, and Michael Frone), the *Psychology of Workplace Safety* (edited by Julian Barling and Michael Frone) and *Health and Safety in Organizations* (Edited by David Hofmann & Lois

Tetrick). Finally, I often have my students read some selections from the *Handbook of Mental Health in the Workplace* (edited by Jay Thomas and Michael Herson). I am sure there are others, but these sources are a great place to start.

What do you think is the most important issue facing Occupational Health Psychologists today?

In terms of the profession, I think it is figuring out who we are. I do not recall who to credit with this idea, but someone once characterized it as figuring out the size of the "P" in OHP. We need to figure out whether OHP is a truly multidisciplinary venture or if, at the end of the day, it is a form of applied psychology that is informed by other fields. I doubt there will ever be one answer to that question that will satisfy everyone potentially affected by it, but I think the identity of the field remains a critical issue to resolve before we can effectively market ourselves to the larger scientific, professional, and governmental communities or to the popular media. It also has implications for training graduate students. What are the "core" issues that students must be familiar with to be considered as effectively trained OHP professionals? Or, are there any core issues? EAOHP and SOHP have been making some headway on these issues (see this edition of the *Newsletter*), but much remains to be done.

How do you think the profile of the discipline could be raised?

This is a critical question and many smart people have pointed out our desperate need for increased visibility. I definitely agree. However, I do want to point out that we need to be patient. Most of us come to OHP from fields that have been around for decades, that have professional organizations with membership numbering in the thousands, and that still struggle with issues of visibility. The OHP professional organizations are still small and the first crop of new young OHP professionals is only now just starting to get established in the workforce. One of our most important needs is to continue to support and develop this generation of successful young professionals, who will go out and "spread the gospel" of OHP.

Although we need to be patient, we cannot confuse patience with complacency. We need to talk to people about OHP at every opportunity. We need to talk about our field at non-scientific conferences (such as to local safety professional groups), in our consulting work, and to our friends and neighbours. That last example may seem trivial, but I recently developed a good potential contact from just such a casual conversation with a neighbour several months ago.

He remembered that I did something related to work and health and later asked me to talk to one of his clients who happens to offer a training program in workplace violence that she was looking to update. So, the point is that we all need to have the mission of talking about OHP whenever we can. In this regard, the professional organizations like EAOHP and SOHP need your help. We need you to get actively involved and help us take these issues on rather than waiting around for someone else to do it!

What advice would you give to those early in their career in Occupational Health Psychology?

Firstly, that they chose the right field! Given my background, I'll focus on advice for mostly academics, much of which is not particularly specific to OHP. Try to be selective in the opportunities you pursue. I am not the first to come up with this idea, but learn to say no. Organizational consulting work that pays well but does not lead to publications or other research opportunities will distract you from establishing a solid early career trajectory. Develop a small list of focused research streams that are the core of your scholarly agenda (do as I say, not as I do!). You are going to get criticized and rejected, but decent research finds its way into the journals eventually. So, be optimistic, persistent, and resilient. For OHP in particular, reading outside of your field is critical, as many important developments in OHP occur in other scientific disciplines and even outside the domain of scientific research (e.g., legal developments, social trends).

When people criticize college professors for being not practically relevant or safely in the ivory tower, keep in mind that you offer a service that creates dramatic and life-long economic benefits for your students. Can you think of another organization offering a service adding hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars/Euros to someone's lifelong earning potential? What could be more practical than that? Moreover, if your research seems too abstract and removed from daily life, realize that you change lives all the time by affecting the way your students think about themselves or the world around them. That might not be true for all of them, but any time you teach a class, you will likely change at least one person's life for the better. Lastly, remember that as time goes on you will not likely look back on your life and say "If only I had worked more." So, take time out to have some fun along the way!

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Identifying core curriculum areas in occupational health psychology

by Jonathan Houdmont and Stavroula Leka, Institute of Work, Health & Organisations, University of Nottingham , UK.

Carrie A. Bulger , Department of Psychology, Quinnipiac University, Hamden, USA.

Variability exists across occupational health psychology (OHP) educational curricula in terms of the topic areas addressed. This may contribute to the creation of programs that are fit for purpose in particular social and economic contexts. However, variability also makes it difficult to discern the defining characteristics of a curriculum, and highlights the need to establish consensus on core thematic curriculum content. In response to this need, this article reports on a survey of OHP academics that aimed to identify the topics perceived by them to be core to a curriculum.

Content variability across OHP curricula can be attributed to at least three factors. First, there is a paucity of curriculum guidance provided by the discipline's European and North American representative bodies: respectively, the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EAOHP) and the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP). Second, many institutions have developed curricula on the basis of faculty members' understanding of the discipline and topic preferences. Third, differences between European and North American definitions of OHP may have implications for curriculum content. The European definition posits that OHP concerns "the contribution of applied psychology to occupational health" (Cox, Baldursson, & Rial González, p. 101). This definition implies the application of a host of psychological specialties in addressing occupational health issues. In contrast, the North American definition encompasses psychological perspectives alongside those from other occupational health sciences (SOHP, 2008).

Little literature exists on the definition of OHP topic areas. Studies have attempted to identify possible curriculum content through examination of existing curricula (Barnes-Farrell, 2006; Fullagar & Hatfield, 2005); and through surveys of human resource managers, public health professionals, experts in disciplines allied to OHP (Schneider, Camara, Tetrick, & Sternberg, 1999), employers and trade union representatives (Tetrick & Ellis, 2002), safety and health practitioners (Sinclair, Hammer, Oeldorf Hirsch, & Brubaker, 2006), and academics (ibid). It is surprising that only one study has sought to elicit views from the academic community, although that community holds responsibility for program design and implementation. The study by Sinclair and colleagues involved a



Jonathan Houdmont



Stavroula Leka



Carrie Bulger

restricted sample of nine academics all of whom worked in the US higher education system; as such, it provides a useful preliminary indication of the views of the academic OHP community while highlighting the need for further research involving this key constituency whose voice has hitherto been marginalized in the curriculum content debate.

In recognition of the imperative for stakeholder agreement on the definition of curriculum areas in OHP, and the paucity of research that has sought to elicit the views of OHP academics in this regard, this exploratory study aimed to (1) identify the topic areas perceived by OHP academics to be core to an educational curriculum and (2) assess whether differences regarding the relative importance of topics (that might hinder consensus on the definition of curriculum areas in OHP) exist between North American and European OHP academics.

Method

Participants and procedure

Two international conferences explicitly recognize the OHP specialty: the US Work, Stress, and Health (WSH) conference series and the EAOHP biennial conference. OHP academics (excluding doctoral students) who attended the 2008 WSH conference (Washington, DC) and the 2008 EAOHP conference (Valencia, Spain) were invited to participate in the study by means of a questionnaire included in the delegate information pack. A total of forty-nine usable surveys were returned via a sealed box located at the registration desk at each conference. Respondents were drawn from seventeen countries; the UK and US had the

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eaohp.org

strongest representation, with nine and 18 responses respectively. Respondents had a mean 14 years of OHP-related work experience. Altogether around 400 academics attended the two conferences suggesting a response rate in the region of 12%.

Measures

The questionnaire presented a list of 68 topic areas selected by the authors on the basis of a review of topics that appeared from 1997 to 2007 in the academic journal associated with each of the discipline's representative bodies: *Work & Stress* (EAOHP) and the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* (SOHP). Respondents were required to indicate the importance of each topic to an OHP curriculum on a 4-point Likert scale: [1] "not important", [2] "somewhat important", [3] "moderately important", [4] "extremely important". Topics within the list were not entirely independent; for example, the terms "work design and health" and "job characteristics and health" might be considered to refer to the same topic. However, topic areas were presented in their alternative forms to capture potentially different perspectives among respondents. Data were also collected on job title, OHP experience, and country of residence.

Data analysis

Topic areas were ranked in terms of their importance by the sample as a whole and, separately, the European and North American sub-samples. Topic areas that achieved a mean score 3.5 or more were defined as core to an OHP curriculum. This criterion was adopted on the basis that it would capture only the most important topics and ensure the identification of a manageable number of topics that could feasibly be addressed within a program of study.

Results

Table 1 lists the seven topic areas that achieved an overall mean score ≥ 3.5 and could thereby be defined as core to an OHP educational curriculum. Five of these topics were identified as core by both

Table 1. Topic areas identified as core to an OHP curriculum (European and US samples combined). Score range 1 – 4.

Topic area	M (SD)
Combating psychosocial risks	3.5 (0.92)
Interventions to promote health	3.7 (0.49)*
Organizational research methods	3.6 (0.61)*
Psychosocial work environment	3.7 (0.58)*
Stress theory	3.7 (0.61)*
Stress interventions	3.8 (0.55)*
Work design and health	3.6 (0.68)

Note: A mean score ≥ 3.5 indicates a topic area as core to an OHP educational curriculum. * Indicates a topic that was considered core by both European and North American participants.

European and North American participants. There was considerable overlap between the topics defined by both sub-samples as core; this suggests that little or no difference existed between the European and North American perspectives on core topic areas.

Discussion

This exploratory study has illustrated that it is possible to identify consensus among a sample of academics on the topics that ought to be core to an OHP curriculum. Agreement in this regard between North American and European academics suggests that differences in approach to the definition of OHP may present no barrier to progress on the identification of core OHP topic areas.

Although caution must be exercised in the interpretation of these findings owing to the restricted sample size, they offer a foundation upon which the OHP representative bodies may collaborate to establish program accreditation criteria that include a focus on the coverage of core topic areas. The introduction of such criteria would represent an important advancement in the structure and regulation of OHP education and training provision.

Consensus between European and North American participants on the importance of five core topics is fortuitous in that it represents a manageable number that most institutions would be capable of incorporating into existing or new curricula. A more prescriptive approach to the definition of curriculum content would not, in all likelihood, be well received at the institutional level, given variance in faculty expertise and regional occupational health needs as well as the imperative for curricula to evolve in response to developments in the content and context of work; factors that highlight the need for agreement on a core curriculum that allows for flexibility in topic choices around a nucleus.

In conclusion, despite its limitations, we believe that this exploratory study makes a unique contribution to the emergent OHP education and training literature through its provision of a foundation upon which the discipline's representative bodies may initiate a wider program of work on the

establishment of progression routes for aspiring OHP practitioners.

Note: The full results of this study are available from the authors on request.

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Thinking of contributing to the Newsletter?

Contributions of all kinds are welcome! See last page of this Newsletter for details.

Occupational Health and Engagement: A matter of Self-Regulation?

1-2 June 2010, Groningen, The Netherlands

Convenors: Annet de Lange and Toon Taris

Keynote speakers: Kai Sassenberg and Tory Higgins

Self-regulation refers to the process by which people seek to align their behaviours with appropriate goals or standards. Regulatory focus has been defined as individuals' characteristic way to approach desired end-states (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Specifically, Higgins distinguished between two dimensions of regulatory focus. Promotion orientation involves sensitivity to the presence or absence of positive outcomes and is characterized by strategies of pursuing gains and successes. Prevention orientation, in contrast, involves sensitivity to the presence or absence of negative outcomes and is characterized by strategies of avoiding losses or failures.

Individuals acquire a characteristic, general regulatory focus. However, a specific regulatory focus can also be induced temporarily by situational cues from, for instance, a task or work environment. For example, work environments that emphasize duties or losses may foster a prevention focus and increase the need among workers to avoid further losses. Prevention-focused employees may be engaged and function successfully in such environments using vigilance and avoidance strategies. On the other hand, an employees' general regulatory focus may also influence the type of jobs or tasks they prefer. A worker with a promotion focus may look for jobs that include challenging demands as well as resources to facilitate learning and growth. However a worker with a prevention focus may tend to avoid mismatches between demands and resources, and may select work accordingly.

A fit between a person's regulatory focus and the task (or work) may be important in explaining health and engagement. Few studies have examined regulatory focus theory and fit to the organizational arena, and none to date has examined these processes in relation to occupational health outcomes, engagement or occupational health models.

Meeting

The meeting will have a two-day workshop-like format.

Funding for holding the meeting has been provided by the from the WAOP, The Dutch Working Association for Organizational Psychology, an organisation that stimulates research in The Netherlands (www.waop.nl), and the EAOHP (<http://eaohp.org>)

Contributions invited

Work and organizational psychologists who have interesting new data on this topic are invited to submit an abstract of 300-500 words by 1st April 2010 to Annet de Lange (see below). There will be no fee for participation, but participants will have to meet their own expenses.

Keynote speakers

Kai Sassenberg is head of the research unit "Social Processes" and full professor at the University of Tübingen, Germany. he is interested in the impact of self-regulation processes on social interaction and intergroup behavior, and has published many articles on self-regulation.

Tory Higgins is Professor of Psychology at Columbia university and Professor of Management at the Columbia Business School in the US. He is well-known for developing the Self-Discrepancy and Regulatory Focus Theories and has received many rewards for his work.

Further information

Annet H. de Lange

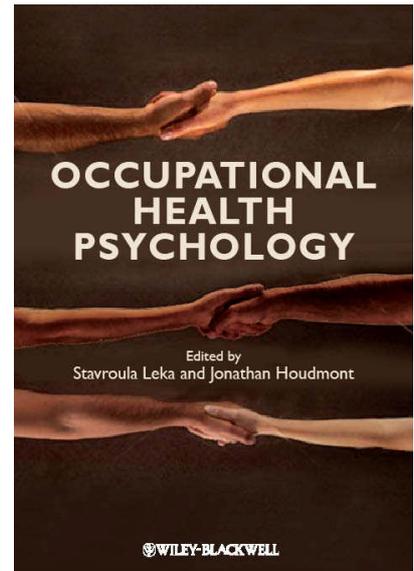
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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Edited by Stavroula Leka & Jonathan Houdmont

Wiley-Blackwell, 9th April 2010

ISBN-10: 1405191155

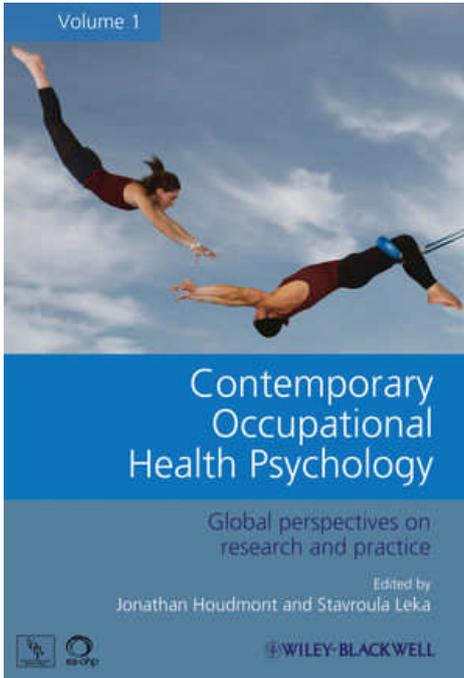


In view of the rapid international expansion of OHP education and training provision it is surprising that no textbooks have been written for the purpose of introducing students to the specialty. This book is the first to address the need for such a volume. Written specifically for a student audience, the book comprises eleven chapters that, in sum, provide an overview of the discipline through an examination of key theoretical perspectives, issues of interest to researchers and practitioners, and drivers of OHP activities that have shaped and defined the specialty since its emergence. Each chapter is written by internationally-recognized experts who are united by a belief that psychological science can make a valuable contribution to the protection and promotion of workers' health.

"Occupational Health Psychology is a much needed textbook for this rapidly developing field. It provides a thorough and up-to-date introduction to this topic. The contributors include some of the most eminent scholars working in this area. I strongly recommend it as a text for any introductory course on Occupational Health Psychology. It belongs on the bookshelf of anyone with an interest in this area. It is the current authority on this topic." (Victor Catano, Saint Mary's University, Canada.)

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9. **Corporate Culture, Health and Well-Being** Gerard Zwetsloot and Stavroula Leka
10. **Research Methods in Occupational Health Psychology** Toon Taris, Annet de Lange and Michiel Kompier
11. **Future Directions in Occupational Health Psychology** Jonathan Houdmont and Stavroula Leka



Work has already begun to secure contributions to the second volume in the series that will be published in 2012. Authors interested in contributing are encouraged to discuss their ideas with Jonathan Houdmont (jonathan.houdmont@nottingham.ac.uk).

Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology:

Global Perspectives on Research and Practice

Jonathan Houdmont and Stavroula Leka (Eds.)
Wiley-Blackwell, 12th March 2010
ISBN-10: 0470682655

March sees the publication of the first volume in an important new book series that is designed specifically for the occupational health psychology community. *Contemporary occupational health psychology: Global perspectives on research and practice* is a biennial series published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology and the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. Both organizations are delighted to participate in this collaborative venture that aims to (1) publish authoritative, stand-alone, reviews in the field of occupational health psychology, (2) publish new empirical research, where it is appropriate to do so, to enable contributors to advance the field in ways that are not typically possible within the confines of the traditional journal article, (3) attract contributions from an international constituency of experts which, in time, become citation classics, and (4) include topics of contemporary relevance to the interests and activities of occupational health psychology researchers, practitioners, educators, and students. In sum, the series aspires to nothing less than to emerge as *the* major reference work of choice for those with an active interest in occupational health psychology. As it grows, the series will address a wide range of contemporary topics that concern the application of psychological principles and practices to

occupational health challenges and opportunities.

Delegates at the EAOHP's 2010 Rome conference will receive a free copy of the book in their delegate pack – a great incentive to attend! For those unable to make the trip to Rome the book is available for purchase on the Amazon and Wiley-Blackwell websites.

Volume 1 (2010-2011) contains the following chapters:

A multilevel model of economic stress and employee well-being Robert R. Sinclair, Lindsay E. Sears, Tahira Probst, and Mark Zajack

Developing new ways of evaluating organizational-level interventions Karina Nielsen, Raymond Randall, and Karl Bang Christensen

Leadership and employee health: A challenge in the contemporary workplace Töres Theorell, Peggy Bernin, Anna Nyberg, Gabriel Oxenstierna, Julia Romanowska, and Hugo Westerlund

Employee Burnout and Health: Current knowledge and future research paths Arie Shirom

Large-scale job stress interventions: The Dutch experience Toon W. Taris, Ingrid van der Wal, and Michiel A.J. Kompier

(Continued)

The neglected employees: Work-life balance and a stress management intervention program for low-qualified workers Christine Busch, Henning Staar, Carl Åborg, Susanne Roscher, and Antje Ducki

Personal Resources and work engagement in the face of change Machteld van den Heuvel, Evangelia Demerouti, Wilmar B. Schaufeli, and Arnold B. Bakker

Work and health: Curvilinearity matters Maria Karanika-Murray

Peer assistance programs in the workplace: Social support theory and the provision of effective assistance to employees in need Maya Golan, Yael Bacharach, and Peter Bamberger

Individual adaptation to the changing Workplace: A model of causes, consequences, and outcomes Jane D. Parent

Building psychosocial safety climate: Evaluation of a socially coordinated PAR risk management stress prevention study Maureen F. Dollard and Robert A. Karasek

Internet addiction and the workplace Noreen Tehrani

Organizational culture and knowledge management systems for promoting organizational health and safety Dolores Díaz-

"The inaugural volume of Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology lives up to its name and goals. The editors should be commended for assembling a collection of chapters that are truly global in scope and address a wide variety of timely issues in the field. As well as academic scholars and graduate students, this new series will interest practitioners who want to keep abreast of advances in OHP that can inform science-based practice. The Society for Occupational Health Psychology is proud to be associated with it, and we look forward to future volumes."

(Professor Janet Barnes-Farrell, President, Society for Occupational Health Psychology.)

Cabrera, Estefanía Hernández-Fernaud, Yeray Ramos-Sapena, and Sara Casenave

Work-family positive spillover: Where have we been and what lies ahead? Kristi L. Zimmerman and Leslie B. Hammer

The impact of psychological flexibility on health and productivity at work Frank W. Bond, Paul E. Flaxman, Marc van Veldhoven, and Michal Biron

Corporate social responsibility and psychosocial risk management Stavroula Leka, Gerard Zwetsloot, and Aditya Jain

Risk factors, consequences, and management of aggression in healthcare environments Benjamin Brooks, Alice Staniford, Maureen Dollard, and Richard J. Wiseman

4th International Seminar on Positive Occupational Health Psychology

31 May - 2 June 2010, Lisbon, Portugal

This seminar offers an opportunity for doctoral students and researchers of positive occupational health psychology to share developments in knowledge, research, and application. Sessions will be interactive between participants and teaching staff, through lectures and workshops.

Invited speakers include Wilmar Schaufeli, Marisa Salanova, Lois Tetrick and Maria José Chambel.

Abstract submission deadline: 1 April 2010.

For further information please visit the seminar website:

<http://conferencias.iscte.pt/index.php?cf=8/>

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Academy Publications

the Occupational Health Psychologist Published three times per annum. ISSN 1743-16737 (Online). Back copies can be downloaded at www.eaohp.org

Work & Stress A journal of work, health and organisations. Published by Taylor & Francis in association with the EA-OHP. ISSN 0267-8373

Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology: Global Perspectives on Research and Practice, Volume 1 (2010-2011).

A biennial series published by Wiley-Blackwell on behalf of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology and the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. Available from the Wiley-Blackwell websites and through large online retailers including Amazon.



the Occupational Health Psychologist

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please find below general guidelines for submitting articles for future issues of the Occupational Health Psychologist. We are keen to publish many different kinds of articles, and we hope this will encourage submissions from all our members. We welcome articles from students, new researchers, practitioners, as well as long-standing members of the Academy.

We aim to publish three issues per year (Spring, Summer and Autumn).

OHP Research / Practice

We welcome short reports (of no more than about 1000 words) of research findings, practice issues, case studies, brief literature reviews, and theoretical articles. This could be a valuable opportunity for you to disseminate information on your work to both academics and practitioners. When writing these reports please make them as accessible as possible to the broad readership of the newsletter.

OHP Briefings

We also welcome overviews of your OHP-related activities, or those of your research group, consultancy or organisation. This type of article provides a useful insight into the sort of work that is being undertaken across the OHP world community. Additionally, this section enables the communication of policy developments that may have implications for OHP research, practice and education in your country. We would ask that such articles are no longer than 1200 words long.

Opportunities

In a new addition to the Newsletter we would welcome advertisements for job opportunities, internships or PhD studentships. If you have an opportunity you would like to make our community aware of please send a short description to the editor.

Other articles

We welcome news, conference announcements, open letters to your fellow occupational health psychologists regarding any OHP related topics, responses to published articles and brief summaries (in English) of OHP issues that have been reported by your national news media.

To accompany all contributions we welcome appropriate photographs

**Please email your questions, announcements or contributions to
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k.sang@uea.ac.uk**

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