The Academy’s conference in Zürich in April this year was a great success. In all there were four keynote addresses - by Sir Michael Marmot, Wilmar Schaufeli, Sabine Geurts and Georg Bauer. In addition, the programme included 213 oral paper presentations, 20 symposia, three workshops and 98 posters. Three hundred and seventy-four delegates from 43 countries attended the conference.

Proceedings of the conference are now available on the Academy’s website. These include abstracts of all the presentations, posters and keynote speeches. To access the electronic book of proceedings please click on the “Publications” link at www.eaohp.org.

At each conference, the Academy awards a lifetime Fellowship to an individual who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, has made an exceptional contribution to the discipline of occupational health psychology. This year, Philip Dewe, Birkbeck College, Sir Michael Marmot, University College London, and Norbert Semmer, University of Bern, were awarded the EAOHP Fellowship. The André Bussing prize was awarded to Verena Hahn from the University of Mainz, Germany.

The evening reception was held on the first evening of the conference at the ‘Dozentenfoyer’ of ETH Zürich, overlooking the city of Zürich and the Swiss Alps. The reception, hosted by Georg Bauer, provided delegates with the opportunity to network while enjoying the breath-taking views, the canapés and the wine.

The conference dinner was organised at the historic Zunfthaus zur Meisen. The evening began with a champagne reception, during which delegates could view the porcelain and faience collection of the Swiss National Museum. Between the courses of a traditional Swiss menu, Christian Zehnder, a Swiss vocalist, accompanied by a violinist, performed some fascinating and creative tunes of alpine folk music.

A selection of photographs from the conference and quotes from delegates follow on pages 3-6.
A warm welcome to all our readers to the Summer edition of the Occupational Health Psychologist, and in particular, to those of you who might be reading our Newsletter for the first time. We’d like to extend a special welcome to members who have joined EAOHP following what was a very successful conference indeed in Zürich.

There have been some changes to the Editorial Team. David Hollis has taken over responsibility for Newsletter design from Mary Tisserand. On behalf of the Editorial Team, and the readership of the Newsletter, we would like to thank Mary for all her hard work and attention to detail over the past four years - in particular, we would like to thank her for her invaluable support and advice to us as new Editors of the Newsletter. We would also like to welcome David Hollis, Nicholas Andreou and Cristina di Tecco as new members of the Secretariat.

We begin this edition with our Executive Officer’s report of the Academy Conference held in April this year. This is followed by a selection of conference photos, and some quotations that will give a flavour of the aspects that EAOHP members particularly liked.

Our interview in this edition is with Sergio Iavicoli, who was recently elected President of EAOHP. He tells us how his interest in OHP has evolved, the directions he thinks that OHP might take in the future, and his plans for the Academy.

In a Research Report, Christine Syrek, Ella Apostel and Conny Antoni write about the positive role of transformational leadership. Nicholas Andreou reports on the Stress Less programme, a European Commission funded project aimed at reducing work-related stress in the education sector.

We are delighted to introduce a new feature to the Newsletter – ‘Focus on Practice’. The first is an interview with Linn Iren Vestly Bergh, whose role is Leading Advisor, Psychosocial Work Environment in Statoil. We hope that this will be informative and inspirational to those of you who are studying OHP and considering career choices in the professional field.

Peter Kelly and Stavroura Leka have provided a report on the joint Practice and Education Forum session held at the recent Zürich conference. Two recently published books are reviewed in this edition, by Lorenzo Visentin and Siobhan Wray.

As ever, we are grateful to the ‘Work & Stress’ Editorial Team for their news, and to Mary Tisserand for providing information on recently published papers.

Sue Cowan and Jennie Guise, Editors
On behalf of the Editorial Team
email: suecowan@workingwelltogether.eu; jennieguise@workingwelltogether.eu
Zürich conference in pictures
These photographs were kindly taken by Ian Rogers;
www.ianrogersphotography.co.uk

Sir Michael Marmot (right) is awarded the EAOHP Fellowship by Sergio Iavicoli.

Irene Houtman presents Phillip Dewe with his lifetime award.

Verena Hahn (left) receives the André Büssing prize from 2010 winner Kathryn Page.

Norbet Semmer (left) receives his Fellowship from Georg Bauer.

Alistair Cheyne presents his research.

Wilmar Schaufeli presents his keynote
A symposium on organisational level health interventions.

Sabine Geurts’ keynote on recovery from work during off-job time.

Georg Bauer (left) and Sergio Iavicoli welcome delegates at the evening reception at ETH Zurich.

Christian Zehnder serenades the audience at the Zunfthaus zur Meisen.

Sir Michael Marmot gives the opening keynote of the conference.
The following are delegates’ responses taken from the Zürich questionnaire about what they liked about the conference:

“I was really pleased to see the change in emphasis to include the needs of practitioners”

“I liked the presence of so many young researchers from all over the world!”

“The participants contributed all to the success of the conference”

“It was helpful having workshops and themed symposia which allowed you to be able to make some connections between aspects of the work”

“Networking opportunities”

“The focus of conference topics”

“Content was exceptionally interesting and exciting”

“A lot of new faces and ideas”

“Quality of the keynotes and the time dedicated to them”

“I was really pleased to see the change in emphasis to include the needs of practitioners”

“There was a very inviting atmosphere”

Delegates settle down for the entertainment at conference dinner.

Stavroula Leka welcomes delegates to the opening session of the 2012 conference.

Magnificent views of Zürich in the evening.
Zürich conference in pictures and quotes

The following are delegates’ responses taken from the Zürich questionnaire about what they liked about the conference:

“The scientific content of the sessions, good organization and great place”

“The opportunity to meet European and British scholars who I may not see in conferences in North America who are doing superb work in my area of research”

“The quality of keynote presentations!!!”

“The focus of the conference is excellent. The organization of the content itself is great”

“Opportunity to show my work”

“Location!! Of course, content was exceptionally interesting and exciting”

“The scale was nice. If you wanted to meet someone you could do so”

Joining the EAOHP

For information on EAOHP activities and the benefits of joining the Academy go to: www.eaohp.org
**How did you first become interested in occupational health psychology?**

During my medical studies I had the occasion to address the social and organizational determinants of occupational health. I gradually became more interested in these themes and their effects on health, also during my PhD programme in Occupational Health and Toxicology. So I decided to write my PhD thesis on stress and neuroimmunomodulation, focusing on mental health problems related to occupational conditions.

Strongly believing in a positive approach to workers’ health, with a particular attention to mental health, according to the WHO’s comprehensive definition of wellbeing, after my PhD I kept cultivating this interest with a growing attention to risks related to stress at work, which became one of the key issues among my research fields.

My commitment, in this direction, has been consolidated by strengthening cooperation with the main occupational safety and health institutions and research bodies at the European level, which led me to participate in different European networks in this field. Among others, I actively contributed to the works of the PRIMA-EF consortium, which aimed to provide a broad, best-practice framework for psychosocial risk management in the workplace, and was followed by the development of a virtual learning environment for promoting psychosocial risk management at the workplace through the PRIMAeT programme.

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

Currently, my research activity is mainly focused on emerging risks, particularly on work-related stress and psychosocial factors within the EU context. I contributed as National Coordinator to several European projects in this field such as EU-OSHA’s European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), WHO’s programmes for improving the assessment and management of psychosocial risks at the enterprise and policy levels, as well as the two above-mentioned projects, namely PRIMA-EF and PRIMAeT.

I believe that today occupational health psychology should focus attention on the changing nature of the world of work and emerging risks in the workplace. This is particularly crucial in light of the current financial and economic crisis that has rapidly turned into a job crisis, increasing levels of fragmentation, organizational restructuring and downsizing, and flexible work arrangements.

In this scenario, my interest is twofold. On the one hand, I am mostly interested in emerging job insecurity and its recognized widespread impact on workers’ health. On the other, I think it is crucial to develop evidence-based methodologies and tools for diagnosis, monitoring and evaluation of psychosocial risks at work, tailored to sector, organizational branches, size, socio-economic determinants, and legislation specificities. With this view, I actively contributed to the development and validation of an integrated methodology, based on the HSE Management Standards model, to assess and manage work-related stress in Italy, which was evidence-based as well as tailored to the national context.

**How big is your department and how did it evolve?**

Since 2006 I have been Director of the Department of Occupational Medicine of the National Italian Workers’ Compensation Authority (INAIL - formerly ISPESL), which currently includes up to 170 staff members working in different OSH fields. The Department integrates multidisciplinary professional competencies and expertise, including physicians, psychologists, engineers, statisticians, sociologists and others, all integrated under a common vision, namely the prevention of ill-health and development of health and wellbeing in the workplace.
Over the last years, my Department has concentrated its efforts on the progressive growth of research, increasing its scientific productivity and raising its active participation in national, as well as international projects, in the occupational health fields, also in collaboration with national and international universities, associations, institutes and research bodies. Now we are moving towards a bigger Department mainly focusing on occupational health as a broad concept and offering an innovative and multidisciplinary approach to prevention of ill-health at work.

**Could you describe some of the OHP projects in which your department has been, and is currently, involved?**

We are currently focusing on the recognition of objective indicators of the quality of work and working conditions through an epidemiological approach. Our aim is to create an integrated monitoring system for the development and management of work-related risks, combining epidemiological data and surveillance on psychosocial determinants in the economic dimensions. With this view, we are working on setting up a national survey of employees’ perceptions of risk relating to health and safety at work, which will provide feedback about the quality of working life within the national context. On the basis of international models and experiences gained, the survey will be repeated over time and adapted to the changing world of work, to the peculiarities of the Italian context and the needs of the main actors involved in the prevention system, such as employers, workers, health and safety professionals, and other stakeholders, so as to lead to a workplace surveillance and monitoring system of occupational health in the Italian context.

**Where do you see your department going in the future?**

In my opinion, moving towards the strengthening of collaborations with networks on occupational health issues is our top priority for the future. This should be done at two levels. On the one hand, I hope that a great deal of effort will be put into raising high-level research networks, with the aim of improving the quality and dissemination of research findings, through collaboration and dialogue on emerging topics in occupational health among national and international occupational health and safety institutes and associations.

On the other, I believe that stakeholder involvement is crucial and might help to meet organizations’ and workers’ needs, set up priorities and find effective solutions. Moreover, continuous stakeholder involvement will enable the level of awareness on psychosocial problems, and the acknowledgement of health and safety concerns to be raised.

**What do you think has been the biggest contribution made by OHP?**

There are several disciplines devoted to the investigation of occupational health and wellbeing through different perspectives and approaches. Most of these already encompass organizational and workplace factors, as well as individual characteristics and resources among their research topics. Among others, we can consider the huge contribution to the study of workers’ mental health made by some disciplines such as Occupational Medicine, Work and Organizational Psychology, Social and Environmental Psychology, Ergonomics, etc.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that the greatest strength of OHP is its core concepts that make it a discipline open to all those who can contribute to mental health and wellbeing in a multidisciplinary manner. Since it encompasses competencies and expertise from behavioural science and occupational health disciplines, OHP focuses on different aspects related to occupational health, such as psychological, social, organizational, and managerial ones. This interdisciplinary nature provides a great added value to the study of working conditions and their relative impact on health, according to the current comprehensive concept of wellbeing.

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

It is broadly recognized by most researchers that OHP, consistent with Positive Psychology, is moving from an approach focusing on negative concepts to an approach including more positive concepts such as job satisfaction, motivation, work engagement, positive individual and group resources (i.e. self esteem, self and group efficacy, optimism etc). I agree with this vision and I think that it would be a great opportunity for the development of OHP research to foster positive aspects of work. It would enable attention to be focused on the development of working conditions that might improve individual wellbeing and work ability and, in turn, organizational productivity.

In this view, the improvement of a multidisciplinary and evidence-based approach is more and more required. OHP should catch insights and knowledge from other disciplines such as HRM, economics and business, which are more centred on the management and development of workers, and organizational performance.
What do you think is the most important issue facing Occupational Health Psychologists today?

Over the past years, OHP has clearly identified those factors that can have an impact on workers’ wellbeing and health, providing a huge variety of evidence-based models. In my opinion, a pragmatic approach to the management of psychosocial risks is fundamental today to effectively link the specific needs of a productive society with quality of life from the perspective of workers’ mental health.

This should be obtained by strengthening the dialogue among different disciplines, with a view to identifying quantitative and objective health indicators and outcomes, which might be combined with psychosocial ones. Moreover, it is necessary to discern the real needs of organizations providing information for researchers on the one hand, and developing evidenced-based and effective interventions and deliverables on the other. Finally, given that OHP may already offer many established models for investigating working conditions and determinants of health at work, as well as a number of reliable tools, I believe that efforts should be made to drive the inclusion of psychosocial risk management at work in organizations’ overall management processes. Research and practice in OHP can play a crucial role in promoting a cultural change in this direction across organizations.

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

In addition to the improvement of its multidisciplinary nature that I hold as a key value of this discipline, I think it would be important for enhancing the profile of OHP to develop collaboration and alliances both with other relevant international associations with similar aims, and with national ones. I believe that a great investment should be made in networking activities to identify the current situation and needs in different countries, so as to understand in which direction OHP researchers might invest in the future.

Moreover, more efforts are required to connect research with practice. Although research in OHP undergoes a continuous improvement process, and several consolidated theoretical models exist, evidence-based interventions are still needed to guide organizations in managing employees’ wellbeing and health. This means filling the existing gap between research and practice, by promoting dialogue and in-depth investigation of the specific business needs that result from changing working conditions.

What advice would you give to those early in their career in occupational health psychology?

My advice is primarily directed to the OHP community, which has a great responsibility in creating favourable conditions for all those who are starting their career in occupational health psychology. First of all, filling the existing gap in several countries where a specific OHP programme is lacking is, today, a priority. As an example, in Italy there are programmes focusing on themes relevant to the OHP field, such as Work and Organizational Psychology, Health Psychology and others. Nevertheless, it is necessary to provide young researchers with tools and opportunities for enhancing their competencies and knowledge in OHP, in order that they can specialize in this field. In this way, they will have the opportunities to gain access to OHP career paths, and they will also be able to compete with their colleagues from countries, such as the UK, where OHP is more consolidated.

Finally, we have to consider that today work in the research field is unfortunately a challenging choice, which is very difficult for young people to make, due to the high effort required in terms of life choices, economic conditions and instability. Thus, it is really important to encourage and motivate them to get this career path, given their crucial role in increasing the quality of the research over time. In fact, new and fresh ideas, perspectives and approaches, and updated competencies are strongly required for further improvements in the discipline.

What are your future plans for the Academy in your new role as President?

I really consider EAHOHP as a central scientific association for the advancement of research on occupational health psychology, with an active role in improving the scientific debate on the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing in the workplace, and its related impact on enterprise productivity.

I would like to fulfill the role of President by contributing, in particular, to strengthening the collaboration both with European institutions and national associations, with a view to promoting an integrated approach to occupational health psychology.

I strongly believe that occupational health psychology can play a prominent role in improving workplace health and safety at the international level, and I firmly wish to contribute to the promotion of a multidisciplinary and evidence-based approach.

Finally, I would like to contribute to raising the level of awareness of occupational health issues among organizations and stakeholders, with a special focus on the possible impact of workers’ wellbeing and mental health, also in terms of economic costs, organizational productivity and consequences for specific groups of workers.

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Research report

Balancing work and life in highly demanding jobs – leadership as a buffer

By Christine J Syrek, Ella Apostel and Conny H Antoni

In many of today’s jobs employees are confronted with high demands. Particularly in the information technology sector, due to globalization, offshoring and increasing competition, employees are more and more under pressure to meet deadlines and respond in short time to customer requests. Repeatedly, research has confirmed the high prevalence of time pressure in the field of information technology (e.g. Salanova et al., 2002). Time pressure is one of the most influential stressors – on the part of the employee, time pressure has been shown to produce poor wellbeing, which, on the part of the employer, leads to high costs due to sick leave or sickness absence (Clausen et al., 2012), and in the long run results in high health care costs (Ganster, Fox & Dwyer, 2001). Scholars addressing employees in the information technology field also find that the level of exhaustion is particularly high (Hetland et al., 2007). Moreover, employees facing time pressure report problems with balancing work and private life (e.g. Guillaume & Pochic 2009; van der Lippe 2008; Watts 2009). As “time is money” and organizations value time pressure and time-dependent incentives as a means to increase performance (Kocher & Sutter, 2006), they are often not able or willing to reduce this job demand, and even if reduced hours in the context of implementing family-friendly policies are available, they are often not taken because employees expect negative career consequences (Gregory & Milner 2009; Watts, 2009). Thus, research faces the challenge of identifying variables which are able to buffer the negative impact of time pressure on employees’ wellbeing.

Because leadership is viewed as one of the “biggest factors contributing to employee perceptions in the workplace and workforce engagement” (Wang & Walumbwa, 2007, p. 399), leadership may be an influential moderator of the influence of time demands on employees’ wellbeing. Accordingly, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) summarize studies showing that the quality of the relationship with one’s leader, and leaders’ appreciation, support, and constructive feedback may act as a buffer between high job demands and wellbeing. Transformational leadership refers to leaders motivating and empowering employees, supporting and challenging them to develop new skills, recognizing good performance, and having an inspiring vision of the future (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006), thus incorporating the behaviour Bakker and Demerouti (2007) view as essential to reduce the negative effect of job demands. Transformational leadership implies that leaders consider employees’ needs and strengths, listen to employees’ concerns, have knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses, and act on a personal level with the employee (Bass, 1998; Shin & Zhou, 2003). We suggest that this behavior may reduce the negative impact of time pressure, as transformational leaders encourage employees to see demands as challenges, communicate a sense of purpose, and give constructive feedback, which helps to maintain motivation and signals them to continue in the given direction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

Previous research has found a negative relationship between transformational leadership and exhaustion (Corrigan, Diwan, Campion & Rashid, 2002; Hetland et al., 2007). Moreover, as transformational leaders support employees to find creative solutions to their
problems - which could be the case with work-life issues (Wang & Walumbwa, 2007) - consider their personal situation, and attend to their needs, we expect employees’ work-life balance to be enhanced by this leadership behaviour. Several studies reveal that transformational leadership is able to improve employees’ work-life balance (Munir, Nielsen et al., 2011).

We pursued the following three aims with this study. First, we tested interaction effects between time pressure and transformational leadership to find out if transformational leadership can buffer the negative impact of high job demands on wellbeing. In addition to moderators tested in previous research (e.g. job control, self-efficacy — Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), transformational leadership is a particularly promising moderator because it is seen as an important variable influencing employees’ work related perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Second, in line with Bakker and Demerouti’s (2007) argument that predictors of negative and positive outcomes are not always identical, we focused not only on exhaustion as an indicator of impaired wellbeing, but included satisfaction with work-life balance as a positive indicator. With this, thirdly, we built a bridge to the impact of job demands on the interplay between work and private life rather than limiting the effect to outcomes in the work context.

The study is part of a work-learn-life balance project in the information technology sector. Two hundred and sixty-three employees participated in the study. Established scales for time pressure (Semmer, Zapf & Dunckel), transformational leadership (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004), work-life balance (Syrek, Bauer-Emmel, Antoni & Klusemann, 2011), and exhaustion (Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998) were used, all showing good internal consistencies. We controlled for age, sex, tenure, personal situation, full- and part-time work. The results confirm that time pressure is positively related to exhaustion and negatively related to work-life balance, while transformational leadership is negatively related to exhaustion and positively correlated with work-life balance. As hypothesized, transformational leadership buffered the relationship between time pressure and an increase in exhaustion, as well as between time pressure and a decrease in work-life balance. Thus, we were able to show that transformational leadership alleviated the influence of time pressure on exhaustion and increased employees’ work life balance. The study therefore indicates the importance of leaders to show transformational leadership, particularly in highly demanding jobs. Transformational leaders put high demands in the perspective of challenges. The leader not only instills confidence in the employee to be able to finish the tasks, but also continuously develops and empowers them. Moreover, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) point out that the negative effect of a stressor is reduced when employees understand the reasons for the presence of the stressor. Transformational leaders communicate a sense of purpose, which helps employees to understand the underlying reasons for the stress (Rowold & Schlotz, 2009), which reduces exhaustion and increases work-life balance. Lastly, transformational leaders give constructive feedback, which helps employees to improve their performance, and enables them to change ineffective behavior to better deal with high job demands. Bass (1998) developed a concept particularly directed at leaders to train these transformational behaviors. Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa and Chan (2009) recently demonstrated that training interventions are a potential investment with important returns for the organization. Thus, in order to increase employees’ wellbeing, organizations should consider incorporating elements of transformational leadership training in their leader development.

References


Christine J. Syrek completed her PhD in Work and Organizational Psychology and is working as a researcher at the Department of Psychology, University of Trier. Her primary research interests include four major areas: transformational leadership, work-life balance and recovery, psychological contracts, and reward management. Currently, she is involved in a project on the work-learn-life balance of knowledge workers.

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The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work estimated that in 2009 between one in four and one in five individuals in the EU were suffering from work-related stress. Work-related stress has a number of adverse outcomes for individuals’ health, as it has been linked to mental health problems, as well as diabetes and metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disorders, and musculoskeletal disorders (WHO, 2010). Through these, work-related stress also has a substantial impact on the organization.

The STRESSLESS project is a two year initiative funded by the European Commission through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which recognizes the need to develop effective interventions to address work-related stress, and focuses on the education sector. The STRESSLESS project aims to improve educators’ resilience to stress through the development and evaluation of practical guidance regarding stress for educators and educational institutions.

The main deliverables include a Good Practice Handbook and a Practical Guidebook, which together are designed to equip trainers with the necessary materials to be able to intervene and train educators and educational institution managers to better manage work-related stress. Apart from this, several dissemination activities have been planned, including hosting National Seminars and Roundtables, as well as the production of a DVD. Importantly, this initiative targets both the individual, as well as the organization for change, recognising that the best results will only be achieved through a combination of approaches.

Since the beginning of the project, needs analyses have been conducted in the represented EU member states to better understand the current situation. On the basis of these, and established good practices, the aforementioned Handbook and Guidebook have been developed. These were recently piloted in workshops hosted in Greece, Portugal, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland. The feedback received was very positive.

Participants and trainers expressed the view that stress is a critical issue in today’s workplace, yet one that is not adequately tackled. Participants felt that the training, based on exercises and theoretical content from the Handbook and Guidebook, had improved their ability to manage work-related stress. Evaluation also indicated that their knowledge regarding work-related stress, determinants and outcomes had also improved, a necessary goal to ensure the sustainability of positive change. Some trainers felt that the initiative was unparalleled in terms of interventions at the national level in certain member states, suggesting the project had truly added value. The project is nearing the end of its two year development. The materials are undergoing the final modifications, based on the pilot workshops, and will be ready for use in late autumn 2012.

This project is being coordinated by Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI) (Portugal) in collaboration with a consortium of partners: Health Education O.S (Czech Republic); Institute of Work, Health & Organisations (I-WHO), University of Nottingham (UK); University of Patras (Greece); Latvian Adult Education Association (LAEA); The European Association of Teachers (AEDE) (Belgium); MBO Raad (The Netherlands); Vedomo, The Institution for Knowledge Development and Entrepreneurship (Slovenia); and HEIG-VD, School of Business and Engineering, Vaud (Switzerland). For more information on the project, or the materials themselves please visit: http://www.spi.pt/stressless/
How did you first become interested in occupational health psychology?

I first got interested in the field of OHP when I worked for a small consultancy firm that offered health and safety services to small and medium sized companies. At that time, I had finished my Bachelor’s degree in psychology and I was in the process of finding out where to take my Master’s degree. I had not yet decided what I would specialize in within the field of psychology. The health and safety consultancy firm I worked for at that time specialized in the construction industry. Working as a Health and Safety Consultant in a more operational environment, where the physical aspects are very apparent, it was clear that the psychosocial aspects of work also had a critical effect on the workers’ health and safety performance. However, even though psychosocial aspects seemed to be highly relevant for workers’ health and safety, they were often neglected or ignored. This, however, sparked my interest in learning more about the field of OHP. Particularly, I found an interest in the application of scientific psychological principles and practices to occupational health issues. Moreover, I wanted to further explore how I could contribute to the promotion of health and safety in the workplace.

What is your educational background, and what if any, previous relevant work experience have you had?

I studied psychology at St. Olaf College in Minnesota USA, followed by a Master’s degree in Occupational Health Psychology from the Institute of Work, Health and Organisations at the University of Nottingham in the UK. Currently, I have started a part-time PhD in Occupational Health Psychology and Risk Management at the Institute of Work, Health and Organisations, University of Nottingham.

Could you tell us something about your current employer and the kind of department you work in? What are your key responsibilities?

I am currently working in the field of health and the working environment. More particularly I work as a Corporate Leading Advisor for the Psychosocial Work Environment in Norway’s largest oil and gas company. As a Leading Advisor for the Psychosocial Work Environment, I am responsible for running a professional network of practitioners in the company. A professional network is an essential tool for connecting employees across organizational units within a profession; it is an arena for developing relationships between peers and experts. As an arena where knowledge, experiences and practices are shared, the networks are important for strengthening and developing appropriate competence, disseminating best practices and developing new knowledge. Furthermore, I am responsible for ensuring that acknowledged standards, tools, technology and work methods are developed, qualified and applied. As such, I have worked especially with the promotion of health by focusing on issues relating to the design, organization and management of work. This work is part of the company’s ambition of becoming an industrial leader in Health, Safety and the Environment (HSE). Moreover, the company’s health and working environment strategy focuses particularly on workload and work-related stress. Among other things, the strategy states that systematic work with the psychosocial working environment must be carried out over time. The aim is to promote a good working environment that ensures good health and wellbeing for the employees. In the company I work for, psychosocial risk management is an important contribution in reaching the company’s health, safety and environment ambition of zero harm to people.

Could you describe some of the work initiatives/projects in which you have been, and are currently, involved?

Over the past six years, I have worked with the implementation of the Psychosocial Risk Management Approach (PRIMA) in the company where I am employed. The company’s psychosocial risk
management is the application of the risk management framework to psychosocial risks at work. It is based on the principles of prevention, in line with the control cycle, and it aims at risk reduction. To ensure the implementation of methods in line with best practice, the company has co-operated and shared experience with the projects developing the PRIMA-EF (PRIMA Excellence Framework), as well as the WHO’s Global Framework for Healthy Workplaces. The efforts toward strengthening the management of psychosocial risk in the company have so far included: 1) establishment of the Psychosocial Risk Management Methodology based on the PRIMA-EF; 2) development of a Psychosocial Risk Management Approach Manual as an integrated part of the internal performance management system; 3) development of a training programme for practitioners and; 4) the development of an HSE indicator for psychosocial risk as part of the internal performance management system.

To strengthen the management of risk and close the psychosocial risk management loop, I have recently been involved in establishing an exposure indicator for psychosocial risk. The indicator is based on criteria for developing Health, Safety and the Environment (HSE) performance indicators in the company. It has been a priority that the indicator is part of a comprehensive system combining identification of key psychosocial hazards; followed by in-depth risk assessment; and implementation of appropriate risk management measures.

Furthermore, I have been leading the establishment of a “step by step” work process for how to handle complaints of bullying. The objective of the work process is to describe how bullying will be handled in order to ensure that bullying incidents are brought to an end, and that all parties in a bullying case are treated fairly. Both preventive advice and clear guidelines for solving specific cases are included in the work process. The work process for handling bullying is part of the company’s continued effort on implementing a comprehensive psychosocial risk management framework in line with international best practices.

What are the biggest challenges for you as an OHP practitioner?

One of the biggest challenges for OHP practitioners is to ensure that research in OHP is continually translated into workplace interventions. As with health and safety in general, the successful promotion of OHP requires that it is integrated in the daily work processes and not treated as a separate project. In order to fully integrate OHP into the company’s business, it is important to have a business case that is recognizable to the organization. This business case needs to reflect a balance between knowledge from research, the internal experiences from the company, and the internal requirements. These sources should share both the content and construction of the business case and workplace interventions, ensuring commitment from the managers in the organization. By fully integrating OHP issues, companies will have a more sustainable and robust system for managing aspects such as psychosocial risk. As an example, in the oil and gas industry, with its high risk potential, it has been critical to create a business case where OHP initiatives will contribute to prevent both ill-health and safety performance. The business case highlights the prevention of both long time exposures that may lead to ill-health as well as human error that may cause accidents. Furthermore, the interventions implemented should target the work environment as well as the individual, in order to create healthier workplaces and to improve the capacity of workers to protect their safety and health and to maximize their overall effectiveness.

However, in order for practitioners to continually apply the newest research within the field into practice, some issues are of particular importance. It is essential to reinforce both the initial training of students as well as strengthening the dialogue between researchers and practitioners. As an example, the initial training of students should include more practical experiences.

What advice would you give to someone looking for their first job as an OHP practitioner?

OHP is concerned with the broad range of exposures and mechanisms that affect the quality of working life and the responses of workers. It uses knowledge and methods from psychology, public/occupational health, organizational studies, human factors, and other allied fields. As such, I suppose it is important to apply our knowledge about individual psychological attributes, job content and work organization, organizational policies and practices to industries where operational safety is of particular importance. Within the oil and gas industry, I see a growing interest in the human and organizational aspects of HSE. The exploration of accidents in light of human error and poor working environment has gained maturity, and investigations of accidents have provided detailed analysis of the causes of accidents. I believe that OHP, with its particular competence in relation to human and organizational aspects, can contribute to the promotion of health and safety. Moreover, OHP practitioners can be instrumental in supporting the line management in identifying human and organizational risk and implementing initiatives that promote health and wellbeing, as well as preventing incidents from occurring.
Zürich conference joint Practice and Education Forum session

The European Academy held a joint Practice and Education Forum at this year’s conference. Peter Kelly, Chair of the Practice Forum, and Stavroula Leka, Chair of the Education Forum co-hosted the event.

Stavroula introduced the session and delivered a presentation on current issues of concern in relation to practitioner education and training, and the development of the online Psychosocial Risk Management Vocational Education and Training (PRIMAeT) project (www.prima-et.org/primaet.html). A series of presentations were then given by a range of speakers, representing their perspectives on OHP practitioner training in their respective countries. These included: Anna-Liisa Elo from Finland, Sue Cowan and Jennie Guise from the UK, Linn Iren Vestly Bergh from Norway, and Myanna Duncan from the UK.

After the presentations, participants were split into two groups to discuss issues arising, and the way forward for OHP practice and education. There was significant discussion around the roles that occupational health psychologists fulfil in different countries. There was a lively discussion around how best to market occupational health psychology practice and education. In particular, more media engagement was felt to be necessary to continue promoting occupational health psychology. This media engagement should concentrate on the positive impact that occupational health psychology can have on short-term and long-term worker and organizational health.

Participants suggested that more opportunities should be encouraged for exchange programmes as a way of sharing learning and experience around occupational health psychology, and as a means of developing and promoting the discipline. There was an acknowledgement from the discussion groups that such exchange programmes would be useful and should be promoted by EAOHP and similar associations.

There was some discussion that a similar session could be run at the APA/NIOSH Work Stress and Health conference in 2014. Peter Kelly is looking to get this facilitated.

Overall, the session provided a useful opportunity for the education and practice forums to discuss future ways of working together and learning together.
I was determined to dislike this book as I anticipated a re-warming of existing research tailored and spun to fit the small and medium sized enterprise (SME) population. At 187 pages, the book is relatively short, which supported my initial thoughts. However, the realization is swift and satisfying that this is a specialist book targeted at a multidisciplinary audience who are interested in solutions that are appropriate for SMEs; as such, it has both breadth and currency.

The book editors clearly highlight the importance of the SME sector to the economy while recognizing that often occupational safety and health (OSH) is not prioritized. As a result of this, it is not surprising to note that OSH research in small businesses is limited in content and scope - possibly due to it being too challenging to achieve - resulting in researchers avoiding the area. Consequently, in order to address this gap, the editors have drawn together leading contributors from three continents. This is not a collection of traditional research reviews, however, but a well-reasoned consideration of the ways in which OSH may be enhanced in this critical employment sector. It is particularly pleasing to see workable solutions proposed to the challenges raised and recommendations made.

The logical progression and layout of the book is extremely helpful to the reader. Starting with a consideration of safety issues, then progressing to chapters more specifically related to health – and a particular focus on psychosocial aspects of health - the divisions into these subject areas are, however, not absolute and there is much cross-over between the chapters.

The book itself is divided into eight comprehensive chapters. Sharon Clarke is the first contributor (Manchester University, UK) who explores in relatively general terms the obstacles, challenges, and potential solutions to OSH in the SME arena. The need for specificity is then introduced by Mark Fleming and Natasha Scott of St Mary’s University, Canada who investigate how small construction companies manage safety effectively. An interesting angle is taken by E Kevin Kelloway (St Mary’s) and Michael Teed (Bishops University, Canada) in their paper on workplace violence which concludes with a highly specific and applicable review of violence prevention strategy research within SMEs.

Peter Chen (University of South Australia) and Lorann Stallones (Colorado State) focus on an all too common occurrence – fatalities in agriculture, but this innovative chapter is specifically geared towards small enterprises and focuses on ‘hidden’ fatalities. This is the first chapter that moves to more psychosocially specific topics, as these hidden fatalities involve self-inflicted injury. The authors explore various stressors relating to agricultural work, isolation, and other precipitants to auto-injury. Further chapters place a stronger focus on the health sphere of OSH with contributions from Sheena Johnson (Manchester) on the approach to health, wellbeing, stress and stress management; Michael O’Driscoll and Jarrod Haar (University of Waikato, New Zealand) with Paula Brough (Griffith University, Australia) who build on this with their exploration of the implications for SME worker wellbeing within the work-family nexus and SMEs. The book concludes with two fascinating chapters: the first on sexual harassment, authored by Angela Dionisi and Julian Barling (Queen’s University, Canada) and an exploration of SMEs as healthy workplaces by Arla Day of St Mary’s.

The contributors are leading practitioners, researchers and academics in the occupational health psychology field and this volume is both innovative and very specifically targeted at its SME population. I opened this review by declaring my scepticism; the editors describe the volume as “covering a full range of topics ... this insightful book will appeal to a multidisciplinary audience ... as well as small business owners” - I couldn’t agree more. A compact yet appealing volume that is well targeted, superbly written and edited, and a valuable addition to your library.

Review by Lorenzo Visentin, Consulting Director, The Logia Partnership Ltd., UK
Positive Psychology at Work: How Positive Psychology and Appreciative Inquiry Create Inspiring Organizations


Positive psychology is a movement that has grown in research base and interest over the last decade. Interest in the development of effective organizations, in which staff feel valued and give their best, has been a topic of research for many years. At the same time, a movement towards new ways of considering organizational structures, organizational development and the impact of employee engagement and commitment to the organization’s goals is at the forefront of new research. Sarah Lewis’s book brings together these two distinct research fields to consider how the methodologies and techniques of positive psychology can be applied successfully to organizations striving for excellence.

Lewis is a Chartered Psychologist and Principal Member of the Association of Business Psychologists. She is a facilitator and organizational consultant with wide ranging experience with both public and private sector organizations. Sarah brings this practice-based approach to her writing, illustrating concepts with examples and case studies of success. Each area of the book introduces tools and techniques that organizations and individuals can use, making this book useful for business leaders and practitioners alike.

The book comprises eight chapters that address relevant organizational topics ranging from organizational culture, communication and decision making through to leadership, transformation and growth. Each chapter introduces the topic by referencing research and outlining the positive psychological approach to the area. Case studies, examples and practical tips are presented, demonstrating how key concepts can be effectively introduced and developed within organizations. Appreciative inquiry underpins this practical approach, offering a framework for team engagement and wider organizational change. Chapters are supplemented by a list of further reading and resources around the concepts introduced.

Chapter one outlines the principles of the text, drawing helpful distinctions between the field of positive thinking and positive psychology. Lewis outlines the ethical bias of the book, acknowledging that the text is not value-neutral, but aims to offer a methodology for “pursuing wellbeing at work as an ethical endeavour in its own right.”

Chapter two introduces and examines the construct of a positive workplace, building links between positive behaviours and organizational performance. The organization as an adaptive system is discussed extensively, and appreciative inquiry is introduced as a positive change methodology to support culture change within organizations.

Chapters three and four introduce the concepts of engagement, communication and decision making. A range of topics and techniques is introduced and illustrated with examples from practice, including strengths-based reviews, goal setting, flow and mindfulness, dynamic patterns of communication, best self-feedback, and constructs to improve decision making.

Chapter five introduces leadership. Beginning with a discussion of psychopathic leaders, the author moves on to introduce strengths-based and appreciative leadership concepts, relating these to change and the development of strategy.

Chapter six focuses on the development of sustainable growth through a focus on individual capability to increase organizational capacity. The chapter introduces Luthans’s concept of psychological capital to illustrate the link between individual capability and organizational performance. The chapter goes on to discuss how appreciative inquiry can support this process, with a focus on Cooperrider’s Positive Profusion theory of growth.

The final two chapters of the book focus on positive relationships and positive transformation. Chapter seven examines the power of positive teams and the effects of positive connections throughout an organization. Chapter eight reviews the main themes of the book and considers why organizations do not embrace transformative, collaborative approaches to change. Finally, the key methodologies introduced throughout the book are outlined and further supported by case studies.

This is an accessible and practical book, which introduces concepts clearly and illustrates them effectively with the use of case studies and descriptions of techniques. It will be of particular use to the practitioner wishing to develop or introduce positive leadership and appreciative inquiry techniques, and to those who wish to understand how such techniques can be applied to organizational culture and practice.

Review by Siobhan Wray, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University, UK
The latest (2011) impact factors have recently been announced, and once again Work & Stress has performed very well, with an impact factor of 3.00. This places it 7th out of all 72 journals in the category of applied psychology.

As for other OHP journals, the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology now ranks 16th, with an impact factor of 2.07, the European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology ranks 19th and the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology ranks 20th.

Although Work & Stress is officially produced in association with the European Academy, the journal is truly international and accepts contributions from all over the world – they are assessed entirely on merit.

Below we briefly describe the papers that were published in, Volume 26 part 2, 2012, which is online (part 3 has now been published). The papers cover a wide range of subjects, with each having been carefully selected for its contribution to occupational health psychology. We always welcome for consideration contributions that are relevant to the journal’s aims and scope and to its wide and international readership.

Papers published in the latest edition of Work & Stress

by Mary Tisserand

Teamworking

Although implementing teamworking can have very positive results for both the individual and the organization, its potential benefits are not always achieved. With this in mind, Karina Nielsen (Denmark) and Raymond Randall (UK) investigated “The importance of employee participation and perceptions of changes in procedures in a teamworking intervention”. They found that employee participation in intervention processes is crucial in what appears to be an important association with perceived changes in procedures and, therefore, in intervention outcomes.

Negative interactions and emotional fatigue

The second paper, “Can employees be emotionally drained by witnessing unpleasant interactions between co-workers? A diary study of induced emotion regulation”, is by Peter Totterdell (UK) Sandy Hershcovis (Canada), with Karen Niven, Tara C. Reich, and Chris Stride (all from the UK). The authors found that the hospital staff in their sample felt more emotionally drained after witnessing unpleasant rather than pleasant interactions between co-workers, especially when taking the perspective of the target. The emotional depletion appears to be due to self regulating their own responses to the incident. This third-party effect on the witnesses of unpleasant interactions has the potential not only to have a negative effect on the individual but, through passing on this negative effect to others, to pervade the organization.

Shift work tolerance

Tolerance of shift work may be related to personality factors, and this was examined in the study “Personality factors predicting changes in shift work tolerance: A longitudinal study among nurses working rotating shifts”, by Ingvild Saksvik-Lehouillier, Bjørn Bjorvatn and Hilde Hetland (all from Norway), together with six colleagues from Norway, the USA and Italy. The authors investigated the relationships between the personality factors of hardiness, morningness, flexibility and languidity (a measure of languor), and changes in four measures of shift work tolerance: fatigue, sleepiness, anxiety and depression. They found that personality factors, especially hardiness, predicted changes related to shift work tolerance over a period of one year.
Assessment of risk

The UK’s Health and Safety Executive is responsible for the encouragement and regulation of workplace health and safety, and for related research. It has devised management standards for organizations, and a related indicator tool for the measurement of stress-related working conditions. In their study "Psychosocial risk assessment: Measurement invariance of the UK Health and Safety Executive’s Management Standards Indicator Tool across public and private sector organizations", Julian Edwards and Simon Webster (UK) used a dataset from 137 organizations (N=67,347) to test the factor structure of both the original 35-item seven-factor instrument and a new short 25-item version. The results showed that the tool was a good fit to the data for both versions, and for both public and private sector organizations. The measurement structure of both scales was also invariant across small, medium and large size organizations. The study validates both versions of a valuable and reliable diagnostic instrument for use in a variety of organizations.

Appraisals and emotions

Philip Dewe and Linda Trenberth (UK) are interested in how an individual appraises a stressful situation, and in their paper “Exploring the relationships between appraisals of stressful encounters and the associated emotions in a work setting” they explore how appraisals by their participants were related to their emotional responses. They did this using sequential tree analysis (which presents patterns in a system of hierarchical ordering) to create the pattern of appraisals of stress that were associated with the emotions anger, anxiety and frustration. They believe that further work on appraisals would be valuable in order to reach a better understanding of the nature of stressful encounters.

Recovery and mindfulness

Finally, Nabil Marzuq and Anat Drach-Zahavy (Israel) studied "Recovery during a short period of respite: The interactive roles of mindfulness and respite experiences”. They investigated the roles of mindfulness (that is, paying attention to present experiences) and respite activities and experiences during a short period of respite, with the outcome assessed in terms of (decreased) exhaustion and (increased) vigour. They found that both mindfulness and respite experiences were relevant to the recovery process.

Now read the papers!

To view the papers described visit the Work & Stress website. That page also has a link via which you can subscribe to table of contents (TOC) alerts for future editions.

Call for Book Reviewers

EAOHP is looking to expand our team of book reviewers. There are a number of benefits to becoming a book reviewer, including:

- access to the latest books, allowing you to keep up to date with your areas of practice, education and/or research, or simply those that interest you most;
- getting your name known in relevant circles;
- expanding your CV;
- and you get to keep any book that you review!

Book reviews should be approximately 500 to 700 words in length. Books for review will be sent to you, so you will not incur any costs. If English is not your first language, don’t let this put you off – if you need it, you will be provided with help to prepare your review. If you would like to join our team of book reviewers, please email the Newsletter’s Book Reviews Editor, Gail Kinman (Gail.Kinman@beds.ac.uk) with details of your interests.
Academy news

Results of EAOHP Elections

The latest election for the EAOHP committee took place in March/April 2012. Sergio Iavicoli from the Italian Workers Compensation Authority (INAIL) was elected as the new president. The EAOHP Executive Committee Members will serve a four year term 2012-2016. See page 22: European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Offices for more details.

New website

The EAOHP now has a new website with new features including a new Members’ area. The website can be accessed at: www.eaohp.org

New membership management system

Following the Zurich conference, a new membership management system has been introduced. This allows each Member to log into a Members’ area on the EAOHP website to access value-added content, edit user profiles and manage their EAOHP membership. New features and content will be added to the Members’ area in the coming months.

PsycEXTRA

The EAOHP has signed an agreement with the American Psychological Association to include the proceedings from the EAOHP conferences and articles from the newsletters in the PsycEXTRA database. This will allow contributions to the conference and newsletter to be more visible to the research community and more easily citable. PsycEXTRA is a premier resource for information and data on cutting-edge research and practice in the behavioural and social sciences, and is used in academic, medical, and government institutions worldwide. The database also serves as an archive for psychological research. More information about the database can be obtained at http://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/psycextra/index.aspx.

Contribute to the Newsletter!

This is your newsletter! We do our best to cover what interests you, but we need your input. We welcome contributions of all kinds – for instance, news of people in practice, education and/or research, including new professional appointments and contracts, conference announcements, reports of symposia, accounts of work in progress, and letters to the Editor.

We are keen to include content from any contributory discipline, in order that we can encourage discussion and debate around Occupational Health Psychology in its fullest possible sense. You don’t have to be an EAOHP member to contribute, nor do you have to be based in Europe. We welcome contributions from all parts of the globe. We will publish any item that is of interest to Newsletter readers (who number some 1,000 individuals worldwide).

If English is not your first language, don’t let this put you off – if you need it, you will be provided with help to prepare your item.

If you have a contribution for the Newsletter then just send it to a member of the Newsletter Team or, if you are undecided, get in touch with Sue Cowan or Jennie Guise to discuss your ideas. See the back page of this Newsletter for our contact details.
## European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Offices

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## Are you interested in chairing the Academy Education Forum?

In the recent elections, there were no nominations for the Chair of Education Forum, and the position therefore remains vacant. If you are interested in undertaking this role, please email Nicholas Andreou at Nicholas.Andreou@nottingham.ac.uk to find out more details.

## 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 European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology. ISSN 0267-8373

**Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology: Global Perspectives on Research and Practice, Volume 2 (2012-2013).**

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

We are keen to publish many different kinds of articles, and we hope this will encourage a broad range of submissions. We welcome articles from people involved in practice, education and/or research in OHP and across the full range of contributory disciplines, and with a variety of levels of experience. If English is not your first language, don’t let this put you off – if you need it, you will be provided with help to prepare your item. We aim to publish three issues per year.

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 both to 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 organization. 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 ask that such articles are no longer than 1,200 words long.

Opportunities
We would be pleased to receive advertisements for job opportunities, internships or PhD studentships. If you have an opportunity that you would like to make our community aware of, please send a short description to the Editors.

Other articles
We welcome news, conference announcements, open letters 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.

We would be pleased to receive appropriate photographs to accompany your contributions.

Please email your questions, announcements or contributions to the Editors:
Sue Cowan: suecowan@workingwelltogether.eu
Jennie Guise: jennieguise@workingwelltogether.eu