

# *the Occupational Health Psychologist*



Newsletter of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology

Supporting research, practice and education in occupational health psychology Vol 6 Issue 2 September 2009

## EAOHP conference 2010: update and call for papers

Although 2010 may feel some way off, preparations are underway for the Academy's ninth conference which will take place in Rome, Italy, 29-31 March 2010. The conference is being held in the Gianicolo Congressi conference centre, <http://www.gianicolo.it/>, which is located within the Pontifical Urbaniana University, adjacent to St. Peter's Square in the heart of Rome.

Since publication of the last issue of the newsletter there have been a number of developments, most notably the confirmation of keynote presentations by **Francesco Avallone**

(University of Rome "Sapienza", Italy), **Cary Cooper** (Lancaster University, UK), and **Giovanni Costa** (University of Milan, Italy). In addition, your attention is drawn to the call for papers. Abstracts to papers, posters, workshops, and symposia are welcomed on all topics of relevance to occupational health psychology.

Further details on the conference and on the online submission facility can be found at <http://eaohp.org/conference.aspx>

### Abstract submission now open

Deadline for submissions: 20 November 2009

### Andre Bussing Memorial Prize: Nominations welcomed

This prize recognises excellence in an early-career researcher. Nominations close 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

### Delegate registration

Discounts are available for students and delegates from developing countries. Registration available until 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

*Left: The Roman Colosseum. Image: FreeStockPhotos.com*



**In this issue:** Interview with Andrew Noblet, page 3 ... Article on European intervention practices, page 7 ... Work & Stress news, page 10 ... Across the Pond, page 12 ... Article on publication outlets in OHP, page 15 ...

# CONTENTS

- 1** EAOHP CONFERENCE, ROME 2010
- 3** INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW NOBLET
- 7** SOME EUROPEAN INTERVENTION PRACTICES FOR COMBATING PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS, by Noortje Weizer and Peter Oeij
- 10** WORK & STRESS NEWS
- 12** "ACROSS THE POND", BY LESLIE HAMMER AND GWENDOLYN LEITA
- 15** PUBLICATION OUTLETS IN OHP: RESULTS OF A PILOT STUDY, by Maria Karanika-Murray, Irvin Schonfeld and Leigh Schmitt
- 18** GUIDELINES ON SUBMITTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of any other person or organisation. The *Occupational Health Psychologist* does not in any way endorse the views expressed.

## Editorial

Welcome to the second of the EAOHP newsletter for 2009. We are pleased to include contributions from the UK, Europe, Australia and The USA. This issue's research article comes to you from Noortje Wiezer and Peter Oeij (TNO Quality of Life, Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research). Their paper: *Some Practices of Interventions of Combating Psychosocial Risks in Europe* describes how interventions can deal with the risks that employees are exposed to, by combating either the causes or the symptoms of stress. Using two European case studies, the authors suggest that interventions directed at the individual or at HR/Polycymaking, whilst effective, are not as sustainable as interventions that address the root causes of occupational stress.

Our interview in this edition is with Andrew Noblet, Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour at Deakin Business School, Deakin University (Australia). Andrew tells us about his route into Occupational Health Psychology, his research interests and the current work of his institute, and discusses his concerns about the impact of the current economic climate.

Leslie Hammer and Gwendolyn Keita have contributed this issue's 'Across the Pond' feature. In their article, Leslie and Gwendolyn discuss the formation of the SOHP, describing its roots back to 1983 when the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health identified job stress as one of the top ten leading causes of occupational ill health. This comprehensive history of the SOHP allows insight into the range of academic disciplines that constitute and inform Occupational Health Psychology, in addition to highlighting the contributions of key figures in the field.

Work & Stress news includes an update on online submission and information on papers in the journal's next edition, which will include three on the subject of bullying and two on burnout.

Members may recall recently participating in a joint EA-OHP and SOHP survey which explored the range of journals that are used by Occupational Health Psychologists. We include a summary of the findings of this pilot study, provided by Maria Karanika-Murray, Irvin Schonfeld and Leigh Schmitt. The authors suggest that the findings could be used to identify the core journals for occupational health psychology, while at the same time noting that the results should be regarded with caution and remaining aware that they do not reflect the quality of the journals described. We feel that this small study will stimulate debate on this issue, and would welcome feedback from our readers.

We hope that the range of articles in this *Newsletter* will encourage other members of the EA-OHP to contribute to forthcoming issues. Further details on how to contribute can be found in the "Submissions Guidelines" on the back page. I would like to thank the rest of the editorial team for their hard work which ensures the continued success of the newsletter.

**Kate Sang, Editor** on behalf of the Editorial Team.

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**Andrew Noblet is Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour at Deakin Business School, Deakin University, Australia. In this interview he describes his route into Occupational Health Psychology, his concerns for our discipline in the current economic climate and his opinions on intervention research.**

## Andrew Noblet

### ***How did you first become interested in occupational health psychology?***

I originally completed a physical education degree and hence I always had an interest in health. However it wasn't until I started working for a corporate health company that I developed a strong interest in employee health, in particular the psychological and emotional aspects of workers' wellbeing. That company specialised in the provision of health screening services and so we would go into workplaces and conduct cholesterol tests, blood pressure checks, fitness assessments, stress appraisals, etc. We were pretty much dealing with the symptoms of poor health and, while it was beyond our brief to consider how working environments might impact on people's health, it was very clear in follow-up counselling sessions that issues such as workloads, rostering systems, job insecurity and the like were having a major impact not just on their psychological health, but on their overall quality of life.

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

I am an Associate Professor at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, and am based within a post-graduate business school (Deakin Business School). My time is divided between research, teaching and administrative responsibilities (normally in that order!) and I've been fortunate enough to teach in an area that is closely aligned with my research, which could be broadly described as organisational behaviour (OB). In terms of my OHP research activities, I have a particular interest in how characteristics of the job (e.g., workload, discretionary decision-making) interact with features of the job context (e.g., organisational justice, perceived organisational support) to influence the health of individuals and organisations. I am also very interested in job stress intervention research, especially the processes that can be used to plan, implement and evaluate comprehensive stress prevention programs.

### ***How did your department evolve?***

Deakin Business School began in 2003 and, right from



the very beginning, we offered units in organisational behaviour, leadership, communication and organisational change. The School always had a core group of 4-5 people with expertise in OB, although in the first few years the emphasis was much more on teaching than research, which was probably more a reflection of the School's age and the need to quickly develop and modify appropriate curricula, rather than people's desire to undertake research. I arrived in 2005 and there was really only one other person who had a specific interest in OHP, John McWilliams. Our "cause" was strengthened considerably when the School appointed a Chair in Management, Professor John Rodwell, who had a formal background in organisational psychology. The three of us have since worked closely together and, with the help of a number of successful grant applications, have been able to bring in research assistants and PhD candidates.

### ***How big is your department, and who are the leading researchers?***

Our OHP research group currently consists of three full-time academic staff members, two research assistants and six PhD/Professional Doctorate students. The group is still its infancy – both in terms of numbers and track record – and although we will never reach the size or capacity found in some of the larger institutions, our aim is to always produce work that has a high level of relevance and utility. John Rodwell, myself and John McWilliams are the leading

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researchers in the team. However our PhD students are developing at a rapid rate and hopefully they will be pushing to take on leadership roles in the coming years.

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

We are currently working on two major projects, one with a state-funded law-enforcement agency and the other with a large health and aged-care organisation. Both are 3-4 year projects, and while the data collection phase for the first project has come to an end, we are still writing up papers using this data. Members of our team have been involved in shorter-term consultancy-type projects, although the focus of many of these has been on broader OB topics such as leadership and organisational development. To this point, most of our OHP research has been “diagnostic” in that we have been tracking levels of stress, wellbeing, satisfaction, etc. over time and identifying the individual and organisational factors that are most closely associated with these outcomes. We have been working with the respective organisations to develop strategies to address any pressing issues that are identified through our work. However we are not formally involved in the implementation or assessment of these initiatives.

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

The next logical step in our research program is to undertake intervention-based research, and we have plans to begin this over the next 12-18 months. There is a wide variety of organisational systems, policies and practices that can influence the health and satisfaction of employees, and one of our goals is to examine how these systems could be modified or restructured to maximise positive outcomes. At the same time, we are keen to continue some of the diagnostic research that we are doing and consider how changing work contexts, especially within the public and not-for-profit sectors, influence both working conditions and health outcomes.

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

I do not have formal qualifications in psychology or OHP and have had little contact with practitioners in the field (aside from my colleagues in the EAOHP!). My background is much more in education and management and hence it is difficult to make an assessment of the collective contributions made by OHP professionals. However I was drawn to OHP – as a field of study – because it provides a very valuable set of frameworks and resources (theories, approaches, tools and techniques) for researching and addressing health in the workplace. From my

perspective, related disciplines such as occupational health and safety, human resource management and employee relations simply do not provide the depth and breadth of knowledge required to adequately address complex health issues in the workplace. I also feel that there are many others like me – who come from a non-OHP background – who have used health psychology concepts or strategies to either better understand an issue or to take steps to address it. Recently I had a phone call from the Chief Executive Officer of a large not-for-profit organisation who wanted to look at how they could develop a more supportive performance management system. Earlier this week I met with the Human Resources Manager of a state-wide health service who was concerned about the lack of engagement among employees. Now these particular people may have been prompted to consider these issues via more mainstream sources, such as through a HR course or even the popular press. However I would argue that these issues would not be as prominent as they are without there being a field of study that specifically addresses OHP research and practice and is dedicated to enhancing the profile of this field.

***What are the current issues of importance in OHP?***

There are two overlapping issues that I feel are important. First, personnel who have a responsibility for addressing OHP-related topics are often working in organisations where there are strong competing forces at play and where employee health may be a secondary consideration. This situation may be much more common-place given the current economic downturn and the increased reluctance of organisations to channel resources into ‘non-essential’ areas. In such an environment there is a clear need for OHP professionals and related personnel to have access to well-informed strategies and techniques that can help them raise health to a higher level on the agenda of influential decision-makers.

Another key issue is for intervention research to focus much more on assessing the processes that are used to plan, implement and evaluate strategies aimed at protecting and promoting employee wellbeing, rather than focusing solely on impact and outcome evaluation. Although there is an increasing number of studies that incorporate process evaluation, additional research is required to (1) explain why certain strategies were successful or not (and the organisational, social and economic contexts in which they are effective) and (2) to identify the processes, systems and mindsets that can facilitate or undermine the development of OHP initiatives, particularly in cost-conscious working environments.

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

Current workplace health program planning frameworks would suggest that one of the critical ingredients in developing sustainable OHP strategies is to take into account the needs of both employees and employers. OHP professionals are generally well-equipped to identify and address the needs of the former, but I do not think we can say the same about the latter group (employers). This being the case, it is important that OHP practitioners and researchers have a broad understanding of how organisations operate. Moreover, OHP personnel need to be able to identify, articulate and respond to the many challenges facing the business community. Although much of this knowledge will inevitably come from "on-the-job-training", I can see the need for OHP courses to incorporate knowledge from a broader range of disciplines, particularly from the management sciences, when developing/modifying pre-employment training programs.

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

As I teach in organisational behaviour, I have a strong bias towards OB texts such as *Behavior in Organizations* by Greenberg & Baron 2008 (more an international text) and *Organisational behaviour on the Pacific Rim* by McShane & Travaglione, 2007 (Australasia). OHP issues and frameworks figure prominently in these texts. However I like the way health-related issues are integrated into more mainstream management topics (such as leadership, communication, organisational structure and design). There are also some very good OHP texts that have this broader focus, for example, the most recent Jex and Britt text, *Organizational Psychology*, (2008).

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

The success of most OHP initiatives rests heavily on the level of support provided by senior personnel within the organisation. This support will not only impact on the resources available to OHP staff but will also influence how other people in the organisation (particularly line managers) respond to the initiatives. It is therefore vital that all OHPs - not just those early in their career - try to develop a deep understanding of the needs of their employer (current or future) and

consider how their expertise can contribute to the organisation's functioning.

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

I know this sounds trite, but the current economic climate is a major threat to everything that OHPs do, not just in terms of the potential impact on employee health (job insecurity, actual redundancies) but also in relation to the resources available for OHP programs and positions. While OHPs would readily argue that health becomes even more critical in this environment, we need to recognise that every cost centre is heavily scrutinised in this climate and any service/function that is deemed even remotely superfluous to an organisation's core needs will be under threat. We therefore need to become much more "streetwise" in how we pitch our initiatives and ensure that we generate a strong business case, which gets back to my point about understanding and responding to the needs of the organisation (not just employees).

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

Related to the above, OHP must be able to demonstrate how it can contribute to the effective functioning of organisations - and to the many individuals and groups therein. At the practitioner level, this means that we need to get much more strategic in what and how we evaluate and to show that our initiatives can more than "pay their way". From a more research-oriented perspective, people like myself need to be generating data that not only exposes problems and issues, but also provides firm guidance how these problems can be addressed and the benefits that can be achieved by tackling these issues. Furthermore, industry needs to know about the findings from OHP research and hence we all need to be using peak industry groups, business forums and government communication channels as a way of promoting the results of our work.

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**Andrew Noblet's** research interests are in the areas of occupational stress, organisational fairness, leader-member relationships, employee performance and workplace health promotion. Andrew also provides advisory services to private and public-sector organisations and regularly undertakes employee needs assessments, leadership training and other organisational development initiatives.

Look out for Andrew's forthcoming chapter, co-written with John Rodwell, on the topic of workplace health promotion, in *A textbook of occupational health psychology* (due for publication by Wiley-Blackwell in March 2010).

### **Forthcoming events**

Keep up to date with forthcoming occupational health psychology events on the 'Forthcoming events' page of the European Academy's website at [www.eaohp.org](http://www.eaohp.org).

## The European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology is delighted to announce its 9<sup>th</sup> conference



The event takes place over three days, 29-31 March, 2010, at the Pontifical Urbaniana University. Situated in the centre of Rome, adjacent to the Vatican, this prestigious venue is sure to offer an ideal location for researchers, practitioners, and educators to share developments in the exciting field of occupational health psychology. The conference is being jointly organised in collaboration with the Department of Occupational Medicine of the Italian National Institute of Occupational Safety and Prevention (ISPESL).

**Confirmed keynote speakers include Giovanni Costa (University of Milan, Italy), Cary Cooper (Lancaster University, UK) and Francesco Avallone (University of Rome "Sapienza", Italy).**

### CALL FOR PAPERS IS NOW OPEN

Submissions are welcomed on all areas of research, practice, and education in occupational health psychology and related areas. Delegates can submit abstracts using the online form on the conference website for four types of session: paper presentations, symposia, workshops and poster presentations.

**Deadline for submissions: 20 November 2009.**

**Deadline for delegate registration: 25 March 2010.**

The draft programme and further information is available on the conference website: <http://eaohp.org/conference.aspx>

We look forward to welcoming you in Rome  
Conference Organising Committee  
EAOHP Rome 2010

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and organisations



# Some European intervention practices for combating psychosocial risks

by Noortje M. Wiezer and Peter R.A. Oeij, TNO Quality of Life, Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research, Hoofddorp, The Netherlands

**I**nterventions to combat psychosocial risks in work organizations can differ in nature. They can be performed at both the level of the organization (as a whole or within certain departments), or at the level of the individual, directed at certain persons. Interventions can also vary in the degree in which they are preventative or curative. Preventative interventions aim to reduce risks, whereas curative interventions aim to 'heal' the negative effects of risks. This means that preventative interventions combat the causes of risks and curative interventions combat the effects of (possibly) the same causes.

This article provides some examples of European interventions designed to combat psychosocial risks in work organisations. The term 'intervention' as applied here refers to a process of change set in motion within an organization, which is directed at reducing psychosocial risks or the effects of those risks. Categories of interventions discussed in this article are shown in Figure 1.

When studying combating psychosocial risk factors, some researchers focus on changing the worker (reducing complaints and increasing the ability to cope with demands) rather than on changing the psychosocial work environment (reducing exposure) (Cox, Griffiths, & Rial-González, 2000; Semmer, 2003; Van Den Bossche & Houtman, 2003). The aim of interventions directed towards the work environment is to eliminate, reduce or change job stressors ('primary prevention'). Individual stress interventions are aimed at altering the way in which way employees respond to job stressors once they get start to show symptoms of stress and get sick, or treating employees who suffer from severe stress consequences ('secondary intervention'); and rehabilitating employees to work after protracted sickness absence ('tertiary intervention') (Kompier & Kristensen, 2001; Van Den Bossche & Houtman, 2003).

We have tried to unravel the types of prevention (primary, secondary and tertiary) into the dimensions combating causes and those combating effects. We also use a dimension to distinguish between interventions at the meso level of the organisation and those at the micro level of the individual (inside the organisation). The meso level is the organisation as a whole, or one or more departments within the organisation. It is aimed at the division of labour and the organisation



Noortje Weitzer



Peter Oeij

of work. The individual level deals with people or (specific) groups of people inside the organisation. Its subject is the individual or their function. Causes of psychosocial risks in organisations refer in essence to how the work process (the primary process of producing products and services) is designed. Thus, the way in which orders are processed results in departments, workstations and jobs. Therefore, the design of jobs is a consequence of the design of the work process (Oeij, Houtman, Vaas & Wiezer, 2004: 100-105).

The various ways in which to deal with risks and the effects that they may cause are shown in Figure 1. Quadrant 1 concerns combating the causes of risks at the meso level of organisations. Possible interventions are redesigning the primary process and, if the scope for that is limited, redesigning jobs. Working conditions are improved in order to reduce risks. Redesigning jobs can also be positioned in quadrant 2 when the intervention is restricted to individual functions. Quadrants 3 and 4 focus on combating the effects of risks; in other words, symptoms are tackled instead of causes. These types of intervention focus on the consequences of the division of labour. At the meso level of organisations, interventions are directed at organizational policy-making and stress management. By policy-making we refer to Human Resource and personnel management – aiming, for example, at reintegration activities and reducing rates of absenteeism.

At the individual level we have placed redesigning

## Thinking of contributing to the Newsletter?

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

tasks, which differs from redesigning jobs, such that output demands are modified to the specific needs of individual employees. Output demands of the job are (temporarily) changed by assigning tasks to the person in order to give them a smaller workload, a slower working speed, and so on, to reduce harmful effects of the same job, which now better meets his or her (temporal) capabilities.

### Examples of interventions

The Task-oriented Information Exchange (TIE), an intervention developed in Germany, is an example of an intervention that can be positioned in quadrants 1 and 2. The TIE supports change processes in organisations in a participatory manner, in which analysis and intervention alternate and both individual and organisational solutions are being developed. The TIE uses groups consisting of participants from different hierarchical departments (levels) and units (disciplines) from an organization. The participants import different kinds of knowledge into the group. Together, the individuals deliver the

### Interventions in organisations to combat psychosocial risks

	Focus on combat causes	Focus on combat effects
Meso level of organisations	<p>Redesign of primary process</p> <p>Redesign of jobs (from a team, department, etc.)</p> <p>1</p>	<p>HR policy and measures against absenteeism, stress &amp; burnout, malicious working conditions, etc.</p> <p>Stress Management Programmes</p> <p>3</p>
Individual level inside organisations	<p>2</p> <p>Redesign of (individual) jobs</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Change output demands (work load, working times, work speed etc.)</p> <p>Training and qualification</p> <p>Therapy, coaching, etc.</p>

Figure 1. Interventions to combat psychosocial risks in organisations.

necessary knowledge. In order to improve or change any work processes this heterogeneous knowledge has to be shared and applied.

The open rota system, developed in Denmark, is an example of an intervention in quadrant 3. In this system employees can implement their preferences regarding the working time schedule and shifts. The organisation of work, the work process, the scheduling of work tasks, and the functions of the employees remain unchanged. The intervention is a structural policy measure directed at the group level. The aim of the measure is to combat the negative health effects of working time schedules.

Use of the Tripod Sigma instrument, developed in the Netherlands, can result in interventions that belong to quadrant 1, 2 and 3. This instrument measures the level of control an organisation has over six Basic Risk Factors (BRF's): Procedures, Hardware, Organisation of Work, Communication, Training and Skills, and Incompatible Goals. The survey results show possible deficiencies in the production process and where these deficiencies are located. Tripod Sigma not only assesses the 'problems' (output) in each area (BRFs) but also their possible causes, examining if resources are adequate and methods are supportive. The allocation of resources and the practicalities of the methods ensue from senior management decisions. Depending on the Basic Risk Factor on which an intervention is focused, the interventions can be positioned in either quadrants 1, 2 or 3.

Two other interventions focus on an individual's competencies. The approach of training coping behaviour to combat burnout, developed in Poland, aims to enhance individual coping with stressful working conditions (the organizational context). This intervention focuses on the competences of the individual and belongs to quadrant 4. In Finland, three interventions have been evaluated: participative work conferences, psychodynamic leadership training, and traditional leadership training. All the interventions have a central focus on improving the qualifications of the employees involved. They are therefore positioned in quadrant 4, although some interventions also improve working conditions indirectly in a more structural manner, and therefore could also be positioned in quadrant 3.

## Conclusions

Comprehensive programs consisting of both individual and organization level interventions have been shown to be most effective in improving health and well-being (Kompier et al., 2000). Interventions directed at the individual (quadrant 4) or at HR or policy-making (quadrant 3) have also been shown to

be effective in reducing work related stress. These effects however are not as sustainable as interventions such as those that belong to quadrants 1 and 2, that solve the root causes of problems.

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# Burnout, Bullying and Online Submissions

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

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus maintained that “everything flows”. Life is a continuously changing stream, and although this may appear to be the same from day to day, there will always have been *some* change. *Work & Stress* is such a stream. Whereas the studies we publish address a limited set of themes, research is continually changing, in terms of the both the topics addressed and the insights reported. This applies to the forthcoming issue of *Work & Stress* (part 3 for 2009), which will be published this month. Although the themes dealt with in this issue will be familiar to our readership, the insights reported are distinctly novel and interesting.

## Bullying

The next issue contains three papers on bullying. We know that being bullied at work may have severe consequences for employee health. However, there are many different forms of bullying and it is very possible that these differ regarding their perceived severity (regardless of the actual outcome). However, to date no research has addressed this issue. The study by Jordi Escartín and colleagues from Spain fills this gap. Distinguishing among six clusters of bullying behaviours, they show that the behaviours in these clusters differ significantly in terms of their perceived severity, with various types of emotional abuse being the most severe category. Moreover, victims and witnesses of bullying and employees without previous experience of bullying all agreed regarding their assessment of the severity of these behaviours.

Two other papers deal with the associations between bullying and other concepts. Nele De Cuyper, Elfi Baillien and Hans De Witte from Belgium propose that job insecurity creates a negative climate that can permit or even stimulate bullying. Furthermore,

workers who feel that they have alternative opportunities for employment may find it easier to cope with insecurity. It is therefore possible that perceived employability moderates the relationship between insecurity and bullying. These theoretically interesting ideas were partly supported in De Cuyper et al.'s study, showing that insecurity and perceived employability may indeed be related to the occurrence of workplace bullying.

The third article examines the health consequences of bullying. In two longitudinal samples, Alfredo Rodríguez-Muñoz from Spain and his co-workers from Spain and Belgium demonstrate that the experience of workplace bullying leads causally to lower levels of dedication (a dimension of work engagement, the opposite of burnout) and satisfaction. Taken together, the latter two studies show that workplace bullying does not occur randomly; bullying is especially likely to occur when work circumstances are stressful, and may have adverse outcomes for worker health.

## Burnout

Two papers in this issue examine burnout. Previous research on the relationships between personality factors and burnout has tended to focus on just a small set of personality characteristics. In contrast, Gene Alarcon, Kevin Eschleman and Nathan Bowling from Wright State University, USA, present a broad meta-analysis of 121 studies that examine the relationships between a multitude of personality factors and burnout, including the familiar big-5 dimensions as well as self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive and negative affect, optimism, proactive personality, hardiness and Type A personality. As employee personality was found to be consistently related to burnout, they recommend that personality variables routinely be included in future burnout research.

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In the second burnout-focused paper in this issue, Katja Boersma and Karin Lindblom from Sweden present a prospective study on the development of burnout in the general Swedish working population. Using cluster analysis, they examine the stability and change of various configurations of scores on dimensions of the Maslach Burnout Inventory across a one-year interval in relation to work-related and mental health variables. Their findings show that the road to burnout (or the absence of it) may vary across subgroups of burnout profiles, and that these subgroups may potentially have different risk factors associated with the development of burnout. This is of importance for the development of early interventions.

## **Demands and control**

The final paper in this issue is by Odd Steffen Dalgard and colleagues from Norway. Most of our readers will know that the theoretically expected interaction of demands and control in Karasek's Demand-control model (strain will be highest in the presence of high demands and low control; high levels of control buffer the adverse effects of high demands) often fails to be confirmed empirically. One reason why this is so could be that workers must have been exposed to these job characteristics for a long time in order to reveal their adverse (for high demands) or beneficial (for high control) effects. Dalgard et al.'s 11-year longitudinal study, in which both a normal causal model and a reversed causal model were tested, supports this reasoning, showing that it is not just the *presence* of particular constellations of work characteristics that affects worker health, but also the *duration* of having been exposed to these characteristics.

## **On-line Submission**

Heraclites' statement that "everything flows" applies not only to the insights reported in the forthcoming issue of *Work & Stress*, but also to the way in which papers are being handled. We now have an internet-based portal for new submissions (you can submit your papers at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/twst>). We have now been dealing with new submissions through the portal for two months, and it is evident that through using this system submissions are being handled quickly and efficiently, which was exactly our intention. However, despite this introduction of a level of automation, the editorial team can still be contacted (see our website for contact details) and we will be glad to receive information or deal with any queries.

We will also be interested to hear what you think of the new online system.

All in all, *Work & Stress* is the same, yet not the same: change was inevitable. We are trying to keep up the good work, and hope that you and the discipline of occupational health psychology in general will profit from our efforts.

### **Toon Taris**

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## **Forthcoming papers in *Work & Stress* vol 23 (3), 2009**

Alarcon, G., Eschleman, K.J., & Bowling, N.A. (2009). Relationships between personality variables and burnout: A meta-analysis.

Boersma, K., & Lindblom, K. (2009). Stability and change in burnout profiles over time: A prospective study in the working population.

Dalgard, O.S., Sorensen, T., Sandanger, I., Nygard, J.F., Svensson, E., & Reas, D.L. (2009). Job demands, job control, and mental health in an 11-year follow-up study: Normal and reversed relationships.

De Cuyper, N., Baillien, E., & De Witte, H. (2009). Job insecurity, perceived employability and targets' and perpetrators' experiences of workplace bullying.

Escartin, J., Rodriguez-Carballeira, A., Porrua, C., & Martin-Pena, J. (2009). Perceived severity of various bullying behaviours at work and the relevance of exposure to bullying.

Rodriguez-Munoz, A., Baillien, E., De Witte, H., Moreno-Jiménez, B., & Pastor, J.C. (2009). Cross-lagged relationships between workplace bullying, job satisfaction and engagement: Two longitudinal studies.

### **Journal home page:**

[www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/02678373.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/02678373.asp)

**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.

# Establishing the Society for Occupational Health Psychology: A true collaboration

by Leslie B. Hammer, Past President, Society for Occupational Health Psychology and Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Executive Director, Public Interest Directorate, American Psychological Association

The Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP) is the first professional organization of its kind in the United States. The development of the Society can be traced to the development of the field of Occupational Health Psychology (OHP). More specifically, however, the development of the field in the United States can be traced to 1983 when the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) included psychological disorders (job stress) as one of the 10 leading occupational diseases and injuries. This led Steven Sauter of NIOSH to approach the American Psychological Association (APA, the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology) to join forces with them to address psychological disorders in the workplace and to translate the NIOSH stress initiative into a national action plan.

In 1988, APA and NIOSH joined forces to address occupational stress. Gwendolyn Puryear Keita represented APA in the collaboration. Joseph Hurrell,

***In this fourth 'Across the Pond' article, Leslie Hammer and Gwendolyn Keita describe the development of the SOHP and its relationship with the EA-OHP.***



Leslie Hammer



Gwendolyn Keita

Lawrence Murphy, and Michael Colligan joined Steven Sauter to represent NIOSH. The first effort was the planning of a conference to translate the *NIOSH Strategy for the Prevention of Work-Related Psychological Disorders* into practical action steps. The 1990 conference, "Work and Wellbeing: An Agenda for the 1990s", began as a small workshop of about 100 but, due to overwhelming demand, was expanded into a major meeting of approximately 300 attendees. APA and NIOSH convened a second conference in 1992 and then six others since that time.

Although APA had 47 divisions at the time, including divisions of industrial and organizational psychology, health psychology, and applied experimental and engineering psychology, none alone seemed to have

the total range of knowledge necessary to optimally address the complex issues of occupational safety and health. In recognition of this reality, APA joined forces in a cooperative agreement with NIOSH to develop a new discipline with psychology – Occupational Health Psychology – that would systematically integrate the knowledge and skills of industrial-organizational psychology, health psychology, and human factors psychology (the three leading areas having specialized expertise relevant to occupational health psychology) with other specialties within psychology (e.g., counselling psychology, neuropsychology, rehabilitation psychology), and with the knowledge-base available in allied disciplines such as occupational medicine, public health, industrial hygiene, social work, and organizational behaviour. NIOSH provided funding through APA for developing this post-doctoral training program and Heather Roberts Fox was the project director.

Two programs were funded (one at Duke University and one at Wayne State University). However, it was soon realized that the only way to train a significant number of graduate students in this field would be to provide support for the development of graduate programs in OHP. Consequently, APA and NIOSH began to support the development of three OHP graduate programs per year, beginning in the mid-1990s. By 2001, there were OHP Graduate programs in eleven universities across the country. These graduate programs became the nucleus of a series of smaller meetings that focused on identifying ways to grow the field of OHP.

Paul Spector and Tammy Allen hosted the first OHP organizational meeting in 2001 at the University of South Florida in Tampa. The second meeting was held during the March 2003 APA/NIOSH Work, Stress, and Health Conference in Toronto, Canada. At that meeting, formal discussions about creating the Society for Occupational Health Psychology began. Six months later, Robert Sinclair and Leslie Hammer, with the support of Portland State University, hosted the third meeting of the group in Portland, Oregon. In October 2003, another meeting was held at the APA headquarters in Washington, DC and the first officers of SOHP were named and

charged with putting in place an organizational structure and with incorporating the Society. Most of those around the table pledged to be founding members and to raise the funds to support the development of the Society and the establishment of non-profit and tax-exempt status for the new Society. Once the group of approximately 50 founding members signed on to the Society, SOHP began to sign on all others interested in joining between November 2005 and 2006 as charter members. These founding and charter members should be recognized as critical supporters of the development of the Society (see their names listed on the Society's website at <http://www.sohp-online.org>). At this Washington meeting, the nascent Society developed a formal relationship with APA.

The *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, which is published by APA, was founded in 1996. James Campbell Quick was the first editor. Over time the journal has become more directly identified with the Society and in 2005 became the official journal of SOHP.

SOHP worked with APA and NIOSH in planning the 2006 Work, Stress, and Health Conference, and in became an official co-sponsor. Also, beginning with 2008, the APA/NIOSH conference became the official conference of SOHP.

As OHP was developing in the United States through the 1990s, our European counterparts were also establishing the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EA-OHP). From the beginning of both organizations there was a close relationship between them. This collaboration became official in 2008, when the International Coordinating Group for Occupational Health Psychology (ICG) was re-invigorated and became more formal (see: <http://icg-ohp.web.officelive.com/default.aspx>). One of the decisions of the ICG was to have the Work, Stress, and Health Conference meet every two years in the years in which EA-OHP does not meet. ICG meets annually at the alternating conferences of the SOHP and EA-OHP.

The field of OHP continues to grow and the need and interest remain today. The EA-OHP and SOHP collaboration remains strong.

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## Joining the EAOHP

For information on EA-OHP activities and the benefits of joining the Academy go to: [ea-ohp.org](http://ea-ohp.org)

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# Publication Outlets in OHP: Results of a Pilot Study

By Maria Karanika-Murray, Nottingham Trent University, UK, Irvin Sam Schonfeld, The City College of the City University of New York, USA, and Leigh Schmitt, Austin Peay State University of Clarksville, Tennessee, USA

This article reports the results of a survey, the purpose of which was to gain opinions on the academic journals that occupational health psychology scholars use to disseminate their work. This article summarises a small study carried out by the authors, which is presented in full in the next edition (Autumn 2009) of the newsletter published by the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (<http://sohp.psy.uconn.edu/SOHPNewsletter.htm>).

The survey was prompted by two related concerns. First, over-reliance on journal prestige can be counter-productive when rankings developed for use in the social sciences in general or for other disciplines are used to evaluate published OHP journals. Researchers commonly use ISI Thomson's journal impact data, which ranks all journals in the social sciences on the basis of their impact. Such impact data are of more relevance in the social sciences and business and management, where the volume of published research is much greater than in OHP. We felt that those scholars wanting to identify the "best" outlet for their work would want to know which journals are viewed as core OHP publication outlets. Such knowledge would provide guidance to scholars on the journals' relative contributions to the field. Second, alternative ways to weigh publication impact, such as *Hirsch's h-index*, evaluate the influence of an article *after* it has been published. The aim of our study was to help us weigh journals by their contribution to OHP, as perceived by OHP scholars themselves, rather than to other disciplines within psychology.

We collected data on a total of 62 journals via an online survey. Respondents were asked to rate the titles with which they were familiar on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) in terms of overall contribution to OHP, theoretical rigour, methodological rigour, and relevance to practice. The survey was distributed via the EA-OHP, SOHP, and Academy of Management Organizational Behavior Division mailing lists, as well as through invitations in the EA-OHP and SOHP newsletters. A total of 102 responses were received. Although 65

*This small study was conducted to obtain the perceptions of OHP practitioners of journals in which they might publish their work.*

(63%) of these were useable, missing data ranged from 22% to 98%. Respondents' tenure in their current organization ranged from 1 to 31 years ( $M = 7.05$ ,  $SD = 6.63$ ); their involvement in OHP (research, education, or practice) ranged from 1 to 39 years ( $M = 9.02$ ,  $SD = 9.02$ ). Geographical distribution of respondents did not affect the final rankings; 45% of respondents listed European and 41%, US affiliations.

We decided to take into account both respondents' ratings of the journals (mean scores) and the number of respondents who had rated a particular journal (a measure of the journal's reach). Thus, we computed a combined measure that involved standardizing the mean rating ( $M$ ) and the sum (the number of respondents who scored that journal,  $N$ ) for each title and then combining them into a Combined Measure =  $M + (N \times M)$  based on the standardized scores. We deleted journals with  $N < 10$ . The correlation between  $M$  and  $N$  of  $r = .34$  ( $p < .05$ ) supports the case for weighting the scores in this way (the raw data are also provided in the full version of the article in the *SOHP Newsletter*). The ten journals with the highest scores on the combined measure in terms of overall contribution to OHP are presented in the table, along with their ranks on the other three criteria: theoretical and methodological rigour, and relevance to practice (see also the full article in the *SOHP Newsletter* for the full results). For overall contribution to OHP we ranked the journals by the combined measure, whereas for theoretical and methodological rigour, and relevance to practice we ranked the journals by their means. We deleted journals with  $N < 10$ .

The results place the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Work & Stress*, and the *Journal of Applied Psychology* in the top three in terms of overall contribution to OHP. The rankings on theoretical and methodological rigour, and relevance for practice did not necessarily mirror the rankings on overall contribution. It should be pointed out that had they been based on means or sum scores, some of the

Table. The ten most highly rated journals in overall contribution to OHP out of a total of 62, ranked according to the combined measure (CM) (with number of respondents rating them, mean ratings (*M*) on a scale of 1 – 5, standard deviations, sum scores, and the CM and their ranks (based on mean ratings) on theoretical rigour, methodological rigour, and relevance for practice.

	Overall contribution					Rankings			
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Sum	CM	CM rank	TR rank	MR rank	RP rank
<i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i>	51	4.7	.6	241	6.0	1	2=	4=	2
<i>Work &amp; Stress</i>	49	4.6	.6	226	5.5	2	5=	4=	3
<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	52	3.6	.8	189	3.3	3	1	1	6=
<i>European Journal of Work &amp; Organizational Psychology</i>	38	3.9	1.0	147	2.8	4	8	8	4
<i>Journal of Occupational &amp; Organizational Psychology</i>	37	3.8	.8	140	2.6	5	2=	2=	5
<i>Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment &amp; Health</i>	23	4.0	.6	92	2.0	6	4	2=	6=
<i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i>	37	3.5	1.0	130	1.9	7=	5=	4=	8=
<i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i>	35	3.6	.8	125	1.9	7=	7	7	10
<i>International Journal of Stress Management</i>	23	3.9	.9	89	1.7	9	9	9=	8=
<i>Accident Analysis &amp; Prevention</i>	20	3.8	1.0	76	1.4	10	10	9=	1

Note. *N*: number of participants who scored that particular journal; CM: combined measure,  $M + (N \times \text{Mean})$  using the standardized scores; TR: theoretical rigour; MR: methodological rigour; RP: relevance for practice. CM was ranked by the combined measure; TR, MR, and RP were ranked by the mean ratings. The full results will be presented in the SOHP Newsletter.

rankings would have been different. Hence we used the combined measure as a way to balance the available information but then ranked these ten journals on the three criteria based on the mean ratings.

The range of top journals that respondents identified as important for overall contribution to OHP clearly shows OHP as residing at the interface of a number of broader disciplines such as applied psychology, work psychology, and management. The core outlets in which OHP scholars publish include journals that are highly regarded in psychology and management but which do not necessarily specialize in OHP (e.g., *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*), as well as journals that are specific to OHP (e.g., *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Work & Stress*, *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*).

The survey did not seek to assess journal quality – objective ways to achieve that exist. Rather, it sought to identify the journals used by OHP scholars. In part 2 of the survey (not reported here; see the full article published in the SOHP Newsletter), respondents were also asked to categorize the journals with which they were familiar into: OHP research, allied discipline, and practitioner journals. Response rates for part 2 were very low, and we thus used overall contribution to OHP, rather than the OHP research category, as a proxy to identifying the core OHP journals.

We should point out that this study was essentially an

opinion poll, and has limitations. The sample was small and self-selected. Respondents' opinions may not have always been reliable. Some scores for the various journals were very close, and would not reach statistical significance; the rankings are therefore only approximate. Also, although there are alternative approaches to calculating the overall contribution, such as just using the mean scores, we decided that it was important to take into account the number of respondents who rated each journal.

Overall these results can be used to inform scholars' publishing strategies, but would not be appropriate for assessing the quality of the journals surveyed. Future investigations should seek to make the assessment more rigorous in terms of distinguishing between the core OHP journals.

This small study reports the opinions of a number of respondents on the journals that OHP scholars use to disseminate their work. We offer it as a small contribution to the OHP community, and invite colleagues to put forward their views on its findings.

We would like to thank Robert Sinclair and Toon Taris for their constructive and invaluable comments.

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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](http://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

### ***Occupational Health Psychology: European Perspectives on Research, Education and Practice***

The Academy's annual book series, which ran from 2006 to 2008. The series charts developments across research, education and practice in the specialty. Available now at: [www.nup.com](http://www.nup.com)

Volume three was launched at the Academy's conference in Valencia in November 2008.



# *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  
The Editor, Kate Sang:  
k.sang@uea.ac.uk**

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