



OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER



NHSF, Workplace Health & Wellbeing Unit, HR, Issue 11.



International Congress On Occupational Health, 2018

In May, Ireland had the privilege of hosting the 32nd International Congress on Occupational Health (ICOH). ICOH is a global network of professionals working across the field of health, safety and wellbeing. The theme of this years conference was *Workplace Health and Wellbeing - Linking Research to Practice*. Over 2,200 delegates attended and participated in the week-long conference with 42 keynote presentations, 196 special and abstract sessions, 700 posters, 852 academic presentations in the parallel sessions and over 300 hours of educational content.

A predominant feature of the conference were examples of where collaboration across OSH disciplines drove improvements in Workplace Health and Wellbeing. The HSE’s Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit (WHW), established in March 2016, promotes collaboration across **Health and Safety, Occupational Health, Human Resources, Employee Assistance and other disciplines** to advance worker wellbeing. Examples of our joint safety campaigns are [Workplace Stress Management](#), our [DSE Campaign](#) and our [Healthy Workplaces for all Ages Campaign](#) offering HSE employees a comprehensive and robust response to these emerging hazards.



Nick Parkinson, Head of Function, NHSF

Several of our colleagues presented abstracts and posters at the ICOH conference reflecting many of the OSH projects delivered by the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit. It was a great opportunity to compare our work to international projects and to appreciate the OSH expertise we have within the HSE.



Poster Presentations

Six Specialist Registrars (SpRs) produced nine posters for the Student Poster Competition category. We are delighted to say that three of the SpRs won awards for their posters. Congratulations to all who participated and to the winners who were:

Inside this issue

- ICOH 2018
- Corporate Safety Statement
- Sleep
- ERSI Research
- HELP
- Learn & Share
- What’s New
- Manual and People Handling Policy
- Bariatric Guidelines

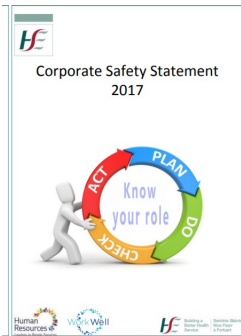
- Dr Anthony O’Keefe won third place with his poster entitled “Occupational stress and depressive symptoms in hospital doctors working in Ireland”. Published abstract available at: http://oem.bmj.com/content/75/Suppl_2/A338.1
- Dr Nataliya Kononenko won runner up place with her poster entitled “Predicted sickness absence from employment compared with Department of Social Protection Guidelines for Closed Certification with common health problems”. Published abstract available at: http://oem.bmj.com/content/75/Suppl_2/A75.2
- Dr Sujil Jacob who won runner up place with his poster entitled “Relevance of Audiometric HSE Categorisation Reference Value and Modernisation”. Published abstract available at: http://oem.bmj.com/content/75/Suppl_2/A523.3



Written by: Dr Lynda Sisson, Deputy National Director of HR,

Together, we will continue to empower HSE employees to maintain their health and wellbeing in a supportive and safe work environment. For more information and advice, see workwell.ie

CORPORATE SAFETY STATEMENT, 2017



As required by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, the Health Service Executive (HSE) **Corporate Safety Statement** (CSS) describes the arrangements in place for safeguarding and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for employees, service users, visitors and all who come in contact with our Services or activities.

The CSS places the management of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as a prime responsibility for managers at all levels.

All employees have a responsibility for their own occupational safety, health and welfare and that of others in the workplace and hence successful implementation is greatly dependent on the full cooperation of every employee. Failure to comply with the terms of the Corporate Safety Statement may result in disciplinary action.

The CSS is applicable to all services and all employees throughout the HSE and places obligations on both management and employees to ensure the safety management system is fully integrated into day-to-day business.

To see full document, see [Corporate Safety Statement 2017](#) and also the [Guideline for developing your Site/Service Safety Statement](#).

A WAKE UP CALL

Can the lack of sleep have an impact on my performance at work?

Yes, recent UK research found that about 30% of workers claim they are less productive because of a lack of sleep.

Am I more likely to have accidents?

Yes, Jason Eden, the founder of Sleep and Fatigue Research states that you can be up to 8 times more likely to have an accident due to lack of sleep.

What about my health?

In a Sleep Council experiment (October 2013), they discovered that when their volunteers sleep was reduced from 7.5 hours to 6.5 hours the genes associated with processes like inflammation, immune response and response to stress became more active. The team also saw increases in the activity of genes associated with diabetes and risk of cancer. The reverse happened when the volunteers added an hour of sleep.

So what can I do?

Give yourself 20 minutes to unwind and address some of the issues in your life which are stopping you from getting enough sleep. You may need to change your sleep patterns and get more sleep.

TIPS TO HELP YOU DEVELOP A REGULAR SLEEPING PATTERN:

Keep active:

Regular exercise - try to avoid exercise in the hour before bed time.

Avoid stimulants:

Avoid tea and coffee, or foods high in sugar, in the evenings.

Wind down:

Bedtime routine- wind down time before going to bed. Turn off all technology, do something restful such as gentle stretches or taking a warm bath.

Routine:

Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.

No naps:

If possible, avoid naps during the day.

Get comfy:

Your bedroom should be a comfortable temperature. If it is too hot or too cold, it may make it more difficult for you to sleep.

Find a good book:

Reading in bed can focus your mind and empty it of the day's worries.

Relax:

Try to relax with [deep breathing exercises](#) when in bed. The smell of lavender oil can help with relaxation.



Source of Tips yourmentalhealth.ie

WHAT LATEST ESRI RESEARCH IDENTIFIES?

Recently published research from the *Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)* and the *Health and Safety Authority (HSA)* analyses sectoral accidents and illnesses (2001 –2014). It is based on data that forms part of the Quarterly National Household Survey carried out by the Central Statistics Office.

The report provides some interesting reading for HSE managers; in summary it reveals that in the health sector :

- * There has been a rising trend of injury and illness since 2010 with **more claims of illness than injury**
- * **Shift or night workers and new employees face a greater risk of injury /illness** than other workers in the sector
- * Over the period 2002 to 2014, the main illness experienced by workers was due to **musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), stress, anxiety and depression (SAD)**.

Over the period 2002 to 2013, **MSD and SAD accounted for 68% of work-related illness** in Ireland across all recorded sectors. In 2011 alone, it was estimated that over 590,000 working days were lost due to occupational accidents, and a further 596,000 days were lost due to work-related illness (HSA, 2014). In 2011 expenditure on Occupational Injury Benefit amounted to €16.5 million, and expenditure on Disablement Benefit was €77.5 million (Department of Social Protection, 2012).

It is important, therefore, because of the high occurrence rate and the associated high cost, to focus on MSD and SAD with a view to improving worker health and wellbeing, and reducing the number of working days lost.

Researchers :Helen Russell, Bertrand Maître and Dorothy Watson

See our [Manual Handling and People Handling Policy 2018](#) and [Prevention and Management of Stress in the Workplace 2012](#) and [Stress Resource Pack](#) for guidance.

How can I find health and safety advice, support or book OSH training?

Explore our website at: www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing

Discover a wealth of information to assist you managing health and safety; log your request for advice or book training on the Self Service Helpdesk

Let us know if you need more information on a particular topic so that we can build these resources

Planning to improve your health and safety performance, please use the information on the website and helpdesk

LEARN AND SHARE: TWO SOCIAL WORKERS ASSAULTED

Two social workers were assaulted on a home visit by the mother of a vulnerable child. They were visiting her to carry out a child safety plan assessment. While note-taking, both social workers were struck over the head with a metal object by the mother. Both received serious wounds to the head and one of them was later diagnosed with

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

The investigation found the local authority failed to follow its corporate lone working policy or violence and aggression guidance. No risk assessment was completed, staff were not trained and there was a failure to add an aggression marker to make the social

workers aware of the hazards posed by the mother who was known to have a history of violence.

This risk could have been reduced in a number of ways including carrying out the visit in a controlled environment, such as the local social workers' office.

Source HSE, UK

Have you read the;

- [Policy on Violence and Aggression](#)
- [Policy on Lone Working](#)
- [Lone Working FAQ](#)
- [Fast Fact Lone Working Policy](#)

Have you completed your risk assessment and implemented controls to minimise the risk of this type of incident happening to your staff?

National Health & Safety Function

New Policies and Supports:



Also:

- * [Manual and People Handling Fast Fact](#)
- * [FAQ Medical Devices Risk Assessment](#)
- * [FAQ Pregnant Employees](#)

Health and Safety Authority



[A short course for Safety Representatives](#)



[Health Sector Analysis of Work related Injury and Illness 2001-2014](#)



[Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders, and Stress, Anxiety and Depression](#)

NHSF Launches New MH Policy and Bariatric Guideline

The Manual and People Handling Policy, 2018. In a recent ERSI report 2016, musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) were identified as one of the most prevalent types of occupational injuries reported in Ireland and are a leading cause of work related absenteeism. Manual Handling injuries within the Health and Social Care Setting accounted for 30.8% of all injuries reported for the period 2014-2015 (HSA, 2015). It is the Policy of the HSE to reduce so far as is reasonably practicable the risk associated with manual handling and people handling activities. Where the manual handling of loads cannot be avoided, the HSE will take appropriate organisational measures or employ appropriate means to satisfactorily reduce any associated risks through risk assessment.

The [Manual and People Handling Policy](#) applies to all HSE employees, fixed term employees, temporary employees and students and provides guidance to managers and employees on how to:

- Avoid or reduce, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with manual handling and people handling activities
- Provide the highest quality of care to service users and
- Ensure compliance with relevant statutory requirements and standards and guidelines such as those published by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).

Guideline Document on Managing the Manual Handling Issues of Services Users with Bariatric Needs, 2018. In 2015, the Healthy Ireland Survey reported that 60% of the population aged 15 years and over are either overweight (37%) or obese (23%). It is recognised that being significantly overweight can be linked to many chronic health conditions such as heart disease, cancers, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, respiratory conditions, mental health and psychosocial conditions (DOH, 2015). In recognising this profile of service user, the HSE [Guideline on Managing the Manual Handling Issues of Service Users with Bariatric Needs \(2018\)](#) was developed.

Service User Pathway: The Guideline document provides sample pathways for the support and management of service users with bariatric needs requiring:

- A planned or emergency hospital admission
- Care in the community or home setting and
- Ambulance Transfers

The guideline is applicable to all services within the HSE who provide healthcare services to service users with bariatric needs and covers all manual handling and people handling activities undertaken by employees during the course of their work. This [Guideline](#) applies to all HSE employees, fixed term employees, temporary employees and students. It should be read in conjunction with the [HSE Manual and People Handling Policy, 2018](#).

Staff presenting bariatric poster at the Bariatric Care Conference in Galway

