

# Institute for Work & Health Activity Plan 2023/24



Institute  
for Work &  
Health

Research Excellence  
Safe Work  
Healthy Workers



## **2023/24 Activity Plan**

**Research  
Knowledge Transfer & Exchange and Communications  
Corporate Services**

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The 2023/24 Activity Plan represents the first year in the Institute's Strategic Plan and Scientific Research Plan for the period 2023 to 2027. While we are proud of the work we have accomplished in the previous five year period to provide high-quality, actionable research that is of value to employers, workers and policy-makers, we know that some longstanding issues still need to be addressed and new challenges and evidence needs lie ahead of us. We seek to address these issues over the next five-year period.

The activities outlined for the first year of these new plans take place within the context of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)'s 2021-26 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Strategy, *Prevention Works*. This strategy provides a framework for Ontario's OHS system partners that aims to keep Ontario one of the healthiest and safest jurisdictions to work, in Canada and across the world. IWH's current activities are well aligned to support the objectives of the strategy. Our research activities will contribute to building the best evidence to target OHS initiatives and measure the performance of the OHS system, will support efforts to strengthen OHS practices in Ontario workplaces, and will include greater investment in efforts to understand the needs of Ontario's small businesses. The Institute is committed to continuing to support the strategic priorities identified by the MLITSD. The 34 research projects outlined in the Institute's 2023/24 Activity Plan, supported by our integrated and active knowledge, transfer, exchange and communication activities will focus on the following key areas:

- The Institute has a longstanding commitment to describe the sectors, occupations and workers who are employed in contexts that have the potential for the greatest harm. Over the next year IWH projects will identify the hazards associated with highest risk of work injury and illness and provide evidence on the most effective interventions to mitigate these hazards. We will do this, in part, through building data capacity to both identify these sub-groups of the labour market, and also to understand changes in risk over time in response to system activities.
- Canada and Ontario have an increasingly diverse workforce, both culturally and linguistically, and we will conduct research to better understand how this affects health and safety awareness, training and health outcomes.
- We will work collaboratively with our system partners to identify ways to make OHS easier for small businesses to address. We will conduct a range of research to further understand the role that workplace size plays in employer responses to OHS, and how small businesses develop and implement OHS policies in the workplace to mitigate workplace hazards.
- Employers and regulatory authorities are increasingly recognizing the importance of the psychosocial work environment and the impact of certain work dimensions on the mental health of workers. We will conduct work to better address psychosocial factors in the workplace and to provide evidence on what works and does not work in enabling workers with work-related mental health conditions to return to work, in particular for those with post-traumatic stress disorders.
- We will contribute to high-quality research evidence to support workplace practices in the prevention of work disability, in particular for injuries that are invisible and episodic, noting that in Canada, 6.2 million people over the age of 15 years live with conditions that cause disability in their personal or work lives.
- Continue to build collaborative research and knowledge exchange partnerships with our partners in the Ontario prevention system. This includes forums as the IWH-chaired Prevention Knowledge Exchange Group, but we will expand these activities to include bringing together stakeholders around important OHS topics. We will also continue our commitment to involve workplace parties directly in many of our research projects.

Dr. Peter Smith  
President & Senior Scientist

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## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Work & Health's goal is to protect and improve the health and safety of working people by providing useful, relevant research in two key areas: (1) preventing work-related injury and illness, and (2) promoting recovery and work functioning following injury and illness. Our work provides impartial, evidence-based guidance to government policy-makers, health and safety associations, workers and employers, occupational health and safety professionals, disability management professionals and clinicians.

The Institute's work is achieved through three programs. The Research Program focuses on the prevention of work-related injury and illness and the prevention and management of work disability. The Knowledge Transfer & Exchange (KTE) and Communications Program builds and maintains relationships with stakeholders to enable the ongoing exchange of information and research evidence and produces and disseminates a wide range of lay-friendly products (tools, guides, policy briefings, newsletter articles, videos, infographics) to ensure research findings are known to, and taken up and applied by, relevant stakeholders. The Corporate Services Program supports human resources, financial and facility management at the Institute, and also provides support to the Institute's 12-member Board of Directors. .

The 2023/24 Activity Plan describes individual research projects to be conducted over the course of the year, outlining project objectives, staffing, stakeholder involvement and alignment to the objectives of the Ontario Prevention Office's Occupational Health and Safety Strategy, *Prevention Works*, and to its *Research Roadmap*. The work of the KTE and Communications Program and the organizational support role played by the Corporate Services Program are also described in the plan.

## Research

Research projects for 2023/24 fall into two overarching research themes – ‘work as a determinant of health’ and ‘health as a determinant of work’. Research projects in the first area focus on understanding the effect of working conditions on both physical and mental health, the distribution of hazards across the Ontario labour force, how increased cultural and linguistic diversity impacts occupational health and safety outcome, and the role that employer size plays in the implementation and effectiveness of OHS policies in the workplace. Research projects in the second area focus on understanding modifiable factors associated with labour market and health outcomes among workers with work-related injuries, in particular mental health conditions, workplace practices in the area of accommodating health conditions that limit an individual’s ability to work, and understanding how the future of work might affect access to the labour market for people with disabilities. As third priority, in addition to the two overarching research themes, IWH will focus on building data capacity. As part of our research efforts, we will identify and access important data sources that are required to understand and evaluate occupational health and safety system partner activities, determine existing information gaps in the data landscape, and pursue novel data linkages and identify and address information gaps in the data landscape. In all our work, we will utilise the most appropriate and rigorous research methods, taking a multidisciplinary approach.

## Knowledge Transfer & Exchange and Communications

KTE and Communications at the Institute aims to put research findings into the hands of key decision-makers and other research users in a timely, accessible, and useful manner. Decision-makers include workers, employers, OHS professionals, policy-makers, clinicians, other researchers and more. Additionally, KTE and Communications aim to strengthen stakeholder relationships and to make research evidence available, understandable, and useable. The work of KTE and Communications directly advances the objectives of the *Research Roadmap* by supporting the development of research partnerships and by producing and disseminating evidence-based information products.

## Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides facilities support, human resources management, and finance and accounting capacity for the Institute. It also oversees the purchase and maintenance of equipment and supplies. The administrative infrastructure and human resources functions support the diversity and complexity of work at the Institute. It also provides liaison and support to the Institute’s Board of Directors.

## GUIDE TO ACRONYMS, AFFILIATIONS AND STANDARD SENTENCES

In the following project pages, IWH uses two **standards sentences** in the Knowledge Translation Strategies sections to refer to a host of activities.

The sentence that reads “This project uses an integrated KTE approach” encompasses the following:

The Institute’s integrated knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE) approach involves stakeholders throughout the research process. Often acting through a stakeholder advisory committee, they help tailor the study question, interpret findings using language and contexts relevant to stakeholders, and disseminate research results to their networks.

The sentence that reads “Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles” encompasses the following:

Using the format best suited to the findings, IWH shares plain-language findings through newsletter articles, research summaries, infographics, videos, policy briefings, media releases and/or articles tailored for external stakeholder publications. Dissemination vehicles include the Institute’s monthly e-newsletter IWH News, its quarterly newsletter At Work, and its social media channels, including Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube channel. Findings are also shared via the Institute’s IWH Speakers Series webinars and at relevant stakeholder (non-academic) events. Finally, findings are shared in peer-review journals and at academic conferences. Through these dissemination vehicles, IWH reaches a wide range of audiences, including policy-makers (especially in employment, labour, disability and workers’ compensation), employers, workers, health and safety professionals, disability management professionals, public health practitioners, clinicians, academics, research funders and more.

Throughout the following pages, **acronyms** are used to refer to organizations with which most readers in Ontario’s Prevention System are likely familiar. The acronyms are spelled out below for reference, in alphabetical order.

Please note that the indicated project end date refers to the end of the funding period, not necessarily the end of the project in terms of all results being available. This is due to the time it takes to write journal articles and get them through the peer-review process, as well as the time it takes to create lay-friendly products communicating research findings.

Please note that project costs are those estimated for the year and are subject to change year over year. However, total project costs will align with total project funding by the end of a project.

CCOHS – Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety  
CCRW – Canadian Council on Rehabilitation & Work  
CIHR – Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
DLSPH – Dalla Lana School of Public Health  
ESDC – Employment Standards Development Canada (Government of Canada)  
HSAs – Ontario’s health and safety associations  
IHSA – Infrastructure Health & Safety Association  
IWH – Institute for Work & Health  
IRCC – Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada  
KTE – knowledge transfer and exchange  
MLITSD – Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development  
OCRC – Occupational Cancer Research Centre (Ontario Health)  
OHCOW – Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers  
OHS – occupational health and safety  
PHAC – Public Health Agency of Canada  
PSHSA – Public Services Health & Safety Association  
RTW – return to work  
SSHRC – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council  
WSIB – Workplace Safety & Insurance Board  
WSN – Workplace Safety North  
WSPS Workplace Safety Prevention Services

Note: All research team members are **affiliated** with the Institute for Work & Health unless otherwise indicated (i.e., Name (Organization))

## PREVENTION OF WORK-RELATED INJURY AND ILLNESS

In this section, we provide an overview of the Institute's research plans for 2023/24 focused on the prevention of work-related injury and illness. Our portfolio of projects addresses vulnerable workers, the effectiveness of OHS programs, and working conditions and health. We indicate, where findings warrant, the projects that may result in an evidence-based guide, tool or other resource that may be useful to our non-research partners. Note that, for many of these research projects, the Institute's KTE staff will engage with employers, organized labour, health and safety associations, OHS professionals and other partners to act as advisers on the research and to support the transfer of research evidence to policy and practice when the research is completed.

### **Alignment to the Prevention Works Strategy**

The project activities described in this section align to and support the objectives of the 2021-26 Occupational Health and Safety Strategy, *Prevention Works*.

In the year ahead, we will engage in a strong and diverse portfolio of research to strengthen information on the causes of occupational injury in Ontario, and targets for prevention initiatives. This aligns to the 2021-26 strategy of building and using the best evidence to target initiatives and measure performance.

In alignment with the Prevention Works Strategy, the Institute's research program has a strengthened focus on supporting the needs of small business. This portfolio of work includes a qualitative study of the needs and motivations of small business owners or managers when it comes to OHS, as well as quantitative studies related to the incidence of work-related injury and illness in small businesses in Ontario.

The Institute's research program will also continue to focus on workplace cannabis use, the adverse health consequences of opioid use among Ontario workers, understanding the experiences of recent immigrants in the Ontario labour market, and exploring the complex relationships between mental health and work.

Taken together the following research project not only help build the best evidence, but will facilitate the process through which this knowledge can be used to improve occupational health and safety knowledge and practices, and support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities.

## Understanding occupational injury risks in Ontario (1175)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/occupational-injury-risks-in-ontario-0>

**Description:** The Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health & Safety reported to the Minister of Labour in December 2010. Legislation was passed in June 2011 implementing a range of recommendations from the panel, including the establishment of a Prevention Office within the Ministry with responsibility for developing and executing an integrated occupational health and safety (OHS) strategy for the province.

The Expert Advisory Panel included a recommendation to improve the indicators of OHS performance at both workplace and systems levels. In 2019, the Ontario Auditor-General recommended strengthening investments in research to better understand the effectiveness of measures to deter OHS violations. In responding to these recommendations, the MLITSD, as it is now called, made “to build and use the best evidence” a priority objective in its 2021-2026 OHS strategy, *Prevention Works*.

This project supports the implementation of this objective through the establishment of an Epidemiology Unit on Occupational Injury within IWH. Specific projects conducted under the auspices of the unit are described on their own pages below, specifically projects 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179.

### **Objectives:**

- Build data capacity in Ontario through the identification of relevant sources of OHS information and labour market participation relevant to better understanding the distribution of occupational exposures leading to work-related injuries and illnesses
- Develop strategies to combine resources through novel data linkages and other approaches to create a more complete picture of OHS risks at the population level
- Initiate and complete a range of epidemiologic studies to better understand the impacts of system level interventions to prevent injury and illness in Ontario.

**Method:** Mixed methods

**Project status:** Ongoing project, initiated in April 2020, supported through the MLITSD

**Research Team and Roles:** Peter Smith (Principal Investigator ex officio), Avi Biswas, Victoria Landsman, Cameron Mustard, Lynda Robson, Faraz Vahid Shahidi (Research Team), Qing Lao (Analyst), Sabrina Imam (Coordinator), Ron Saunders (Consultant)

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** A project team within the MLITSD’s Prevention Office will contribute to the definition of objectives and timelines for this project.

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, OHS policy-makers and decision-makers in Ontario, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, employers, workers, labour, OHS professionals

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Smith P, Oudyk J, Cedillo L, Inouye K, Potter G and Mustard C (2022) Perceived adequacy of infection control practices and symptoms of anxiety among in-person elementary school educators in Ontario. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 64 (11), e763 – e768

Smith P, Oudyk J, Cedillo L, Inouye K, Potter G and Mustard C (2022) The psychosocial work environment among educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Occupational Medicine*, 72 (7), 439 – 445

Smith P, Smith BT, Warren C, Shahidi FV, Buchan S and Mustard CA. (2021) The prevalence and correlates of workplace infection control practices in Canada between July and September 2020. *Health Reports*, 32(11),16-27

Smith P, Oudyk J, Potter G, and Mustard C. (2021) Labour market attachment, workplace infection control procedures and mental health: a cross-sectional survey of Canadian non-healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*, 65 (3), 266 – 276.

Smith P, Oudyk J, Potter G and Mustard CA. (2021) The association between the perceived adequacy of workplace infection control procedures and personal protective equipment with mental health symptoms: A cross-sectional survey of Canadian health-care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 66 (1),17-24.

Smith P. Analyzing the data behind workplace spread of COVID-19. WSIB COVID-19 Expert Panel Meeting, February 24, 2022.

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:**

Smith P, Curran A, Davis L. (2021). Lessons from COVID-19 for the next pandemic: We need better data on workplace transmission. Published in The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/lessons-from-covid-19-for-the-next-pandemic-we-need-better-data-on-workplace-transmission-170023>

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

Smith P. Workplace COVID-19 Protections and transmission: findings from population-level data in Canada. IWH Speaker Series, Online, October 19, 2021 <https://www.iwh.on.ca/events/speaker-series/2021-oct-19>

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/enhancing-ontario-labour-force-denominator-information>

**Reasons for the study:** This project is being conducted under the auspices of the Epidemiology Unit on Occupational Injury housed within IWH and aims to help fulfil the MLITSD's objective to 'build and use the best evidence' as outlined in *Prevention Works*. Understanding the rate at which something occurs (e.g., per person or unit of time) is a core principle in epidemiology. Rates allow for meaningful comparisons of the risk of an event occurring (e.g., work-related injury) among different segments of the labour market. For example, rates allow risk-of-injury comparisons by gender, age, industry, and/or size of workplace. While both emergency department and workers' compensation claims are sources of information on injury events in Ontario, only workers' compensation data includes detailed information on relevant measures such as occupation, industry and workplace size. However, the challenge with workers' compensation data as a source of injury information is that not all labour force participants in Ontario are insured with the WSIB. As such, labour force estimates have to be adjusted for differential WSIB coverage before they are combined with workers' compensation claims to produce rates of claims per worker or per hour worked. It is also important to examine rates of workers' compensation claims across different types of occupational exposures to inform prevention targets. Available sources of information on occupational exposures have to be linked to Canadian occupational coding standards to enable them to be used in estimating claim rates. As we move out of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an increase in hybrid work arrangements, understanding exposure time at work has become more challenging, and this project will address measurement challenges in this area.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Estimate rates of workers' compensation claims and emergency department visits in the Ontario labour market

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** Ongoing project, initiated in April 2020, supported through the MLITSD

**Research Team and Roles:** Peter Smith (Principal Investigator), Faraz Vahid Shahidi, Qing Liao (Analyst)

**Collaboration and Partners:** MLITSD (Prevention Division and Data Analytics and Research Branch), WSIB (Advanced Analytics)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, OHS policy-makers and decision-makers in Ontario, employers, workers, labour, OHS professionals

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Buchan SA, Smith PM, Warren C, Murti M, Mustard C, Kim JH, et al. Incidence of outbreak-associated COVID-19 cases by industry in Ontario, Canada, 1 April 2020-31 March 2021. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2022; 79(6):403-411. <https://doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2021-107879>

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## Trends in the severity of work-related injury in Ontario (1177)

**URL:** <https://iwh.on.ca/projects/occupational-injury-risks-in-ontario-0>

**Reasons for the study:** This project is being conducted under the auspices of the Epidemiology Unit on Occupational Injury housed within IWH and aims to help fulfil the MLITSD's objective to 'build and use the best evidence' as outlined in *Prevention Works*. The project will develop a methodology to classify the severity of work-related injuries and illnesses presenting to hospital emergency departments in Ontario over the period 2004 to 2021. Analyses of changes in the incidence of severe injury over time will inform understanding of effective OHS prevention efforts over the past decade and will identify severe injury hazards for priority attention over the period 2021-2026.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Acquire emergency department records for the period 2018-2021 to supplement records for the period 2004-2017 currently held by the Institute
- Complete classification of injury severity for 2,000,000 emergency department records for the treatment of work-related injury and illness
- Analyze trends over time in the incidence of severe injury, by economic sector and employer size

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** Ongoing project, initiated in April 2020, supported through the MLITSD

**Research Team and roles:** Cameron Mustard (Principal Investigator), Avi Biswas, Victoria Landsman, Peter Smith (Research Team)

**Collaborators and Partners:** MLITSD's Prevention Office

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD and WSIB policy-makers, Ministry inspectorate, large and small employers, worker representatives.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 4. Make OHS easier for small businesses

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Evaluating the relative effectiveness of distance learning in JHSC certification training (1178)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/evaluating-effectiveness-of-distance-learning-in-delivering-ontarios-jhsc-certification-training>

**Reasons for the study:** This project is being conducted under the auspices of the Epidemiology Unit on Occupational Injury housed within IWH and aims to help fulfil the MLITSD's objective to 'build and use the best evidence' as outlined in *Prevention Works*. The project will measure the relative effectiveness of three different training modalities – in-class, distance and e-learning – by rigorously measuring learning outcomes among Ontario workers taking JHSC Certification Part 1 training delivered by three health and safety associations.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Use surveys to measure the JHSC-relevant knowledge of Ontario workers before and after they take JHSC Certification Part 1 training
- Analyze survey data to determine whether in-class, distance and e-learning training differ in their impact on JHSC-relevant knowledge and other learning outcomes
- Provide evaluative evidence applicable to the continuous improvement of certification training

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** Ongoing project, initiated in April 2020, supported through the MLITSD

**Research Team and Roles:** Lynda Robson, Cameron Mustard (Co-Principal Investigator), Avi Biswas, Victoria Landsman, Peter Smith, Faraz Vahid Shahidi, (Research Team), Cynthia Chen, Victoria Nadalin (Research Analysts)

**Collaboration and Partners:** MLITSD's Prevention Office, IHSA, PSHSA, WSPS

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, HSAs, HSA-based training providers, private-sector training providers, employers, workers, JHSC members, OHS professionals

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

Understanding the injury experience of Ontario small businesses through workers' compensation claims data (1179)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/understanding-injury-experience-of-ontario-small-businesses-through-workers-compensation-claims-data>

**Reason for the study:** This project is being conducted under the auspices of the Epidemiology Unit on Occupational Injury housed within IWH and aims to help fulfil the MLITSD's objective to 'build and use the best evidence' as outlined in *Prevention Works*. The project will provide a description of the injury claim experience of Ontario small businesses, by sector and enterprise size, as well as identify indicators of higher risk for use in targeting initiatives. This will support the targeting of prevention initiatives by identifying sectors in which small businesses are especially at higher risk.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Develop indicators of higher risk in small businesses, by sector, derived from workers' compensation data
- Provide a better understanding, by sector, of the performance of smaller businesses in OHS relative to larger businesses using workers' compensation data
- Provide an understanding of how the risk profile of businesses changes over its life cycle

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** Ongoing project, initiated in April 2020, supported through the MLITSD

**Research Team and Roles:** Lynda Robson (Principal Investigator), Cameron Mustard, Peter Smith (Research Team), Qing Liao (Analyst)

**Collaboration and Partners:** MLITSD's Prevention Office

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, WSIB, HSAs, small businesses in Ontario

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 4: Make OHS easier for small businesses

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Taking 9 to 5? Examining the impact of cannabis legalization on workplace cannabis use and perceptions among Canadian workers (1376)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/workplace-cannabis-use-and-perceptions-among-canadian-workers>

**Reasons for the study:** On October 17, 2018, cannabis use for non-medical purposes was legalized in Canada. There is the potential for cannabis use to spill over to the workplace, which could have OHS consequences. We conducted a survey of 2,014 workers across Canada from a wide range of industries and occupations to better understand pre-legalization workplace use patterns and perceptions. Findings suggest some workers engage in potentially risky workplace use and demonstrate problematic perceptions of the risks of using cannabis in the workplace. Through this study, we will continue to collect information from this group and expand the sample of workers to determine whether legalization is associated with changes in workplace use and related perceptions and norms.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Estimate the magnitude of workplace cannabis consumption and impairment in Canada
- Evaluate the impact of cannabis legalization in Canada on cross-sectional and longitudinal patterns of workplace cannabis consumption, perceptions of risk and impact, workplace cannabis norms, and perceived availability in the workplace
- Examine whether trends in these patterns, perceptions and norms differ according to age, sex, labour market gender roles, occupational groups, and geographic location
- Examine the reciprocal relationship between potentially modifiable factors (perceptions of risk, workplace cannabis norms, perceived cannabis availability in the workplace) and workplace cannabis use over time
- Understand the short-term effects of legalization on workplaces, thus informing the development of policies, practices and prevention initiatives to ensure lower risk use among Canadian workers

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** April 2019 – March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Nancy Carnide, Peter Smith (Principal Investigators), Andrea Furlan, Victoria Landsman, Michael Frone/University at Buffalo (Research Team), Amy Porath, Shawna Meister (Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction), Hyunmi Lee (Analyst), Sara Macdonald (KTE Lead)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Health Canada, ESDC, PSHSA, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, CCOHS, MLITSD, Ontario Building Trades, Unifor, WSN, WSPS, WorkSafeBC, Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association, and Federally Regulated Employers – Transportation and Communications

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience** Employers, worker representatives, HSAs, OHS professionals and policy-makers

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices.

**Funded by:** MLITSD, CIHR

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Carnide N, Lee H, Landsman V, Frone MR, Furlan AD, and Smith PM. Cannabis use and workplace cannabis availability, perceptions and policies among Canadian workers: a comparison before and after the legalisation of non-medical cannabis. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2022; 79(12):824-830. <https://doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2022-108316>

**Related research summaries:**

Cannabis use and the Canadian workplace (2020). Infographic. Available at: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/publications/cannabis-use-and-canadian-workplace-2020>

Cannabis use and the Canadian workplace (2019). Infographic. Available at: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/publications/cannabis-use-and-canadian-workplace-2019>

### **Related interviews and articles:**

Cannabis use linked to higher injury risk, but only among those who use at or before work. At Work: Institute for Work & Health; No. 108, Spring 2022. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/newsletters/at-work/108/cannabis-use-linked-to-higher-injury-risk-but-only-among-those-who-use-at-or-before-work>

Supervisors and people in safety-sensitive jobs using cannabis at work, researchers find. Safety + Health Magazine. April 14, 2021. Available from: <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/21072-supervisors-and-people-in-safety-sensitive-jobs-using-cannabis-at-work-researchers-find>.

At-work cannabis use linked to work factors, including some not expected: IWH study. At Work: Institute for Work & Health; No. 103, Winter 2021. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/newsletters/at-work/103/at-work-cannabis-use-linked-to-work-factors-including-some-not-expected-iwh-study>.

Carnide N. NZ Cannabis referendum 2020: How has cannabis use at work changed, if at all, since legalisation in Canada? Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum. Podcast. June 2020. Available from: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nz-cannabis-referendum-2020-how-has-cannabis-use-at/id1491586601?i=1000477989522>

Dujay J. Is cannabis use on the rise? Conflicting numbers suggest overall consumption is up but at-work use is down. HR Reporter. June 03, 2020. Available from: <https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/safety/is-cannabis-use-on-the-rise/330199>.

At-work use of cannabis reported by 1 in 12 workers – no change since legalization. At Work: Institute for Work & Health; No. 100, Spring 2020. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/newsletters/at-work/100/at-work-use-of-cannabis-reported-by-1-in-12-workers-no-change-since-legalization>

Gismondi A. Where does the use of cannabis now stand in the eyes of the workplace? Daily Commercial News: ConstructConnect. March 18, 2020. Available from: <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/ohs/2020/03/where-does-the-use-of-cannabis-now-stand-in-the-eyes-of-the-workplace>.

Gismondi A. Addressing mental health, substance abuse at work requires new approaches: Experts. Daily Commercial News: ConstructConnect. March 16, 2020. Available from: <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/associations/2020/03/addressing-mental-health-substance-abuse-at-work-requires-new-approaches-experts>.

Cameron G. IWH takes deep dive into the marijuana Pandora's box. Daily Commercial News: ConstructConnect. January 31, 2020. Available from: <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/ohs/2020/01/iwh-takes-deep-dive-into-the-marijuana-pandoras-box>

Alberta College of Pharmacy. "Cannabis in the workplace". Full Scale (a tri-annual publication focusing on issues affecting pharmacy practice). March 11, 2019. Available from: <https://abpharmacy.ca/full-scale/cannabis-workplace>

Jones, SN. "Canadians need to be educated on cannabis in the workplace, new study says". CPA Canada. November 29, 2018. Available from: <https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/news/canada/2018-11-29-workplace-cannabis-policies>

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

Carnide N. Cannabis use and the risk of workplace injury: Findings from a longitudinal study of Canadian workers. Webinar. Institute for Work & Health Open Speaker Series. Toronto, Canada. March 8, 2022. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/events/speaker-series/2022-mar-08>

Carnide N. Have cannabis use and perceptions about workplace use changed since legalization? Webinar & in person presentation. Institute for Work & Health Speaker Series. Toronto, Canada. March 3, 2020. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/events/speaker-series/2020-mar-03>

Carnide N. Clearing the haze: Understanding how Canadian workers use and perceive cannabis at work. In person presentation. Institute for Work & Health Speaker Series. Toronto, Canada. November 20, 2018. Available from: <https://www.iwh.on.ca/events/speaker-series/2018-nov-20>

## Creating safe workplaces for newcomers (1386)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/creating-safe-workplaces-for-newcomers>

**Reasons for the study:** Supporting newcomers' safety at work requires employers to respond to diverse needs of newcomers related to occupational health and safety (OHS) and develop inclusive safety practices. Although there are resources developed for employers in managing diversity within their workplaces, there is a gap in understanding diversity within context of OHS. We know relatively little about whether, and how, employers manage OHS in linguistically and culturally diverse work environments. This project will expand our understanding on linguistic and cultural diversity and implications for safety, and opportunities and challenges for supporting newcomers stay safe at work.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Understand the experiences and needs of the employers, newcomer workers, and service providers related to OHS in linguistically and culturally diverse workplaces.
- Understand feasible and effective approaches to engage employers to the unique OHS needs of newcomers and help employers create safe workplaces for newcomers.

**Method:** Qualitative, rapid review

**Project status:** April 2023-March 2025

**Research Team and Roles:** Basak Yanar, Peter Smith (Principal Investigators) Dwayne Van Eerd , Stephanie Premji (McMaster University) (Research Team)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Access Alliance, Skills for Change, Brampton Multicultural Centre

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** This project will provide a valuable knowledge base for those working in the settlement and employment, and occupational health and safety area.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence.

**Funded by:** IRCC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Understanding cannabis use and associated long-term recovery and return-to-work outcomes among Ontario workers following a work-related injury or illness (1410)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/ontario-life-after-work-injury-study-cannabis-use-and-long-term-recovery-and-return-to-work-outcomes-among-ontario-injured-workers>

**Reasons for this study:** Interest is growing in the role of medical cannabis for the treatment of work-related health conditions. However, little is known about how workers with work-related conditions use cannabis and how their use may relate to recovery. In this study, workers' compensation claimants who participated in the Ontario Life After Work Injury Study are being re-interviewed 18 months after their first interview (about three years after filing their workers' compensation claim). The aim is to better understand their experiences with using cannabis for their work-related condition, as well as their experiences seeking medical authorization and workers' compensation reimbursement for this use. Subsequent qualitative interviews with select workers from the survey sample will provide important context to these issues.

### **Objectives for the study:**

- Describe condition-related cannabis use patterns, changes in use from 18 months to 36 months post-claim, and the factors considered by workers when deciding whether to use cannabis for their work-related condition
- Describe patterns of medical authorization and workers' compensation reimbursement for condition-related use and the factors considered by workers when deciding whether to request medical authorization and reimbursement
- Evaluate the cross-sectional and longitudinal association between condition-related use and recovery outcomes
- Inform programs, policies and practices around cannabis use among injured workers, including identifying the worker subgroups most likely to benefit from guidance around use

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** October 2020 - September 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Nancy Carnide, Peter Smith (Principal Investigators), Andrea Furlan, Cameron Mustard, Stephanie Premji (McMaster University) (Research Team), Victoria Nadalin (Analyst), Sabrina Hossain (Research Associate), Sara Macdonald (KTE Lead), Colette Severin (Project Coordinator)

**Collaboration and Partners:** WSIB, Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Prevention Link (Ontario Federation of Labour), Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic, WSPS, Canadian Injured Workers Alliance, Gratton Consulting

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Health-care providers, injured worker advocates, workers' compensation authorities.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, CIHR

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Opioid-related harms among Ontario workers: leveraging the Occupational Disease Surveillance System as a surveillance tool for working populations (1425)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/opioid-related-harms-among-ontario-workers-surveillance-tool>

**Reason for the study:** Canada continues to face an unprecedented opioid crisis that has resulted in profound consequences for many Canadians. Current surveillance systems in Canada, aimed at monitoring opioid use and harms across the population, typically have no or incomplete information on employment-related characteristics. A collaboration between IWH and OCRC aims to fill this gap.

OCRC has developed a unique surveillance program called the Occupational Disease Surveillance System (ODSS), originally designed to detect, and monitor risks of work-related disease in Ontario workers. The study aims to adapt the ODSS and establish a surveillance program to monitor opioid-related harms among injured workers and the Ontario workforce more broadly. By updating the ODSS and linking data from recent compensation claims to health-care data, the ODSS will be able to capture current trends in opioid-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits among Ontario workers.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Adapt and expand the ODSS to develop a surveillance program that identifies and monitors opioid-related harms in the Ontario working population
- Monitor and describe temporal trends of opioid-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits among Ontario workers since 2006
- Identify the demographic, nature of injury, and occupational characteristics associated with opioid-related hospitalizations and emergency department visits
- Compare incident rates of opioid-related harms in the ODSS to those in the general population of Ontario
- Inform targeted prevention and harm-reduction activities by understanding whether rates of opioid-related harms in particular worker subgroups are changing over time

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** October 2020 – March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Nancy Carnide, Paul Demers (OCRC) (Principal Investigators), Andrea Furlan, Jill MacLeod (OCRC), Chaojie (Daniel) Song (OCRC), Jeavana Sritharan (OCRC) (Research Team), Sara Macdonald (KTE Lead)

**Collaboration and Partners:** WSIB, MLITSD, Public Health Ontario, Ontario Building Trades, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers.

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Health-care providers, injured worker advocates, workers' compensation organizations, employers, OHS and public health policy-makers

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, PHAC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

### **Related research summaries:**

Please see: <https://opioidsandwork.ca/>

### **Related interviews and articles:**

Gismond A. IWH, OCRC project delves into role of employment in opioid crisis. Daily Commercial News. August 2, 2022. Available from: <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/ohs/2022/08/iwh-ocrc-project-delves-into-role-of-employment-in-opioid-crisis>

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Understanding OHS motivations and needs in small business (1430)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/understanding-ohs-motivations-and-needs-in-small-business>

**Reasons for the study:** The WSIB launched the Health and Safety Excellence Program (HSEP) in late 2019. The program aims to enrol a minimum of 4,000 Ontario employers to participate in the adoption of up to 40 health and safety best practice elements that align to the ISO45001 *Occupational Health and Safety Management System*. The participation of smaller firms in the HSEP is substantially less than the proportion of all firms registered with the WSIB. While employees of smaller firms represent 26% of the WSIB's covered workforce, half of traumatic fatalities and 45% of critical injuries occur in smaller businesses. To improve the participation of smaller businesses, the HSEP has adjusted several program features, with the broad objective of increasing the enrollment and participation of smaller businesses in HSEP. This project will fulfil the commitment of WSIB and MLITSD to undertake a study of small business engagement.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Understand the needs, motivations and experiences of small businesses in the Health and Safety Excellence Program
- Understand effective approaches to the delivery of OHS services to small businesses and ways to help small businesses improve health and safety and build strong health and safety cultures

**Method:** Qualitative

**Project status:** February 2022- December 2023

**Research Team and roles:** Basak Yanar, Cameron Mustard (Principal Investigators), Lynda Robson, Reena Shadaan (Research Team), Momtaz Begum (Research Associate), Sabrina Hossain (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** IHSA, PSHSA, WSN, WSPS

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** WSIB, MLITSD, HSAs, small businesses in Ontario

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 4: Make OHS easier for small businesses

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Developing approaches to measuring the dimensions of gender and examining the relationship between 'gender dimension discordance' and health among Canadians (1435)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/developing-approaches-to-measuring-dimensions-of-gender-and-their-relationship-to-health-outcomes>

**Description:** It is well recognised that the incidence and prevalence of many work-related health conditions, as well as labour market exposures, differ for men and women. It is also recognised that the reciprocal relationships between work and health can also differ for men and women. To better understand why differences exist between men and women requires measuring and incorporating dimensions of sex and gender into work and health analyses. Sex refers to biological differences between men and women, while gender refers to socially constructed differences between men and women. Theoretically gender consists of multiple dimensions, although in practice quantitative approaches to measure gender have not adhered to this multidimensional approach. Given that gender is multidimensional, it is also possible that these dimensions may not be concordant with each other. It is not known what the impacts are of gender dimension discordance on health outcomes, although this type of discordance is likely to be most prevalent among the working aged population given the gendered nature of roles and expectations for men and women in the labour market.

**Objectives:**

- Create a multi-dimensional measure of gender, with a focus on the working-age population.
- Using this measure we will: examine the relationships between dimensions of gender and health outcomes; and discordance between gender dimensions and health outcomes.

**Method:** Scoping review (for survey items) followed by cross-sectional study.

**Project status:** February 2022 – March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Peter Smith (Principal Investigator), Monique Gignac (IWH), Mahee Gilbert-Ouimet (U Quebec, Rimouski), Greta Bauer (UWO) (Research Team), Momtaz Begum (Research Associate).

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** None to date

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** This project will provide improved measures of sex and gender in work and health analyses.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices

**Funded by:** CIHR

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/artificial-intelligence-and-occupational-injury-and-illness-in-ontario-implications-for-prevention-and-recovery>

**Reasons for the study:** This research project aims to develop an applied and future-focused understanding of the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) for occupational injury or illness prevention and recovery activities in Ontario. Knowledge of how AI applications can be applied to OHS and work disability management fields is extremely limited, and we currently know little about their advantages and disadvantages. This project seeks to rectify those gaps in knowledge, while building an evidence base to understand the scope of different AI applications and how they can be used to prevent occupational injury and support recovery and RTW (return to work). To the best of our knowledge, our proposed study is one of the first of its kind to better understand the implications of AI applications for Ontario's health and safety system.

**Objectives of the study:**

- A broad scan of diverse sources of evidence to identify applications of AI in preventing occupational injury or supporting recovery and RTW in industrialized economies that can be applied in Ontario.
- Describe and categorize each AI application identified in Obj.1 according to its function, impact on occupational injury prevention and recovery outcomes, and evaluate its strengths and limitations.
- Understand how different health and safety system stakeholders evaluate the AI applications identified in Obj.1.
- Generate and share future-focused recommendations for different Ontario health and safety system stakeholders.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** July 2022 - September 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Arif Jetha (Principal Investigator), Aviroop Biswas, Cameron Mustard, Peter Smith, Jack Dennerlein (Northeastern University), Victoria Arrandale (University of Toronto), Maxwell Smith (Western University)(Research Team) Hela Bakhtari (Project Coordinator) Kay Nasir (Project Coordinator), Sabrina Tonima (KTE Lead)

**Collaborators and Partners:** MLITSD (Dr. Nikhil Rajaram, Provincial Physician, Occupational Medicine Unit), OHCOW (Kimberly, O'Connell, Executive Director), PSHSA (Glenn Cullen, Chief Executive Officer), WSPS (Kiran Kapoor, Vice President Service Delivery), Unifor (Vinay Sharma, Unifor National Representative)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** The applied insights this project will produce can be used by diverse health and safety system stakeholders to innovate their occupational injury prevention and recovery practices.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** WSIB

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

*“Why is training in artificial intelligence critical for work and health researchers? Reflections from the AI4PH Program”* Presented by Dr. Kathleen Dobson, Dr. Aviroop Biswas & Dr. Arif Jetha, Institute for Work & Health, on Tuesday, October 4, 2022

## Champions as social agents of change: What can we learn from worker wellbeing initiatives? (1445)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/champions-as-social-agents-of-change-what-can-we-learn-from-worker-well-being-initiatives>

**Reasons for the study:** Worker wellbeing initiatives are underutilised in Canada despite the sizeable productivity and employee wellbeing benefits. Organizations are often challenged with trying to find ways to encourage the participation of employees, particularly those who may be resistant or ambivalent to change. Increasing evidence has suggested that harnessing the enthusiasm, advocacy, and interpersonal relationships of “champions” (people who champion and act as supportive and enthusiastic voices for new corporate practices) can help build trust and gain support from their colleagues.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Understand who identifies as someone championing worker wellbeing initiatives at their organization, why and how they adopted this role, and the perceptions of champions in attempting to effect change in existing corporate practices.
- Examine the positive and negative experiences of individuals championing worker wellbeing among their colleagues, particularly experiences with colleagues who are ambivalent or resistant to participating in these initiatives.

**Method:** Qualitative study

**Project status:** June 2022 – June 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Aviroop Biswas (Principal Investigator), Monique Gignac, Arif Jetha, Lynda Robson, Basak Yanar (Research Team), Sabrina Tonima (KTE Lead)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Dr. Graham Lowe (Graham Lowe Group)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Organizations seeking to support worker wellbeing strategies.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence; Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices

**Funded by:** SSHRC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Exploring where Canadians work and live and their association with active transportation (1450)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/exploring-where-canadians-work-and-live-and-their-association-with-active-transportation>

**Reasons for the study:** In Canada, 81.5% of full-time working adults are insufficiently active and, therefore, at greater risk for chronic disease and premature mortality. Active transportation (AT), involving walking or cycling are important modes of physical activity in adults, accounting for 33 to 68% of daily levels. The quality of built environments and social environments can support AT. Built environments refer to aspects of the physical environment such as the places and spaces where we work, live, play and travel. Research examining the role of built environments on AT has largely focused on neighbourhood design and has highlighted the importance of walkability, accessibility of facilities and destinations, and AT infrastructure (e.g., bike and walk paths). In contrast, the role of the built environment around workplaces are not as well understood nor is the role of the social environment and the interplay between home and work environments.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Describe and characterize the built and social environments where Canadians work and live
- Describe how these environments are associated with AT and their importance for AT
- Develop key messages that can be used to inform AT-related interventions

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** August 2022 – August 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Avi Biswas, Peter Smith (Co-Principal Investigator), Stephanie Prince Ware (PHAC, Co-Principal Investigator), Justin Lang (PHAC), Paul Villeneuve (Carlton University) (Research Team)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Infrastructure Canada and PHAC

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Urban planners, public health agencies

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** CIHR

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/building-disability-confidence-in-canadas-financial-sector>

**Reasons for study:** Using an evidence-informed intersectional approach, this project aims to develop and launch an online toolkit specifically designed for the Canadian financial sector, featuring products, guidance and services designed to fulfil employer responsibilities under the *Accessible Canada Act* while also meeting the talent needs of the sector. This toolkit will aid managers and staff across all departments to define and understand 'disability confidence,' and what it means to be confident and not just compliant in all areas pertaining to disability. A secondary objective of our project is to bring the community of disability-focused organizations together to collectively support the development of the toolkit, while ensuring that all organizations' unique viewpoints are captured and incorporated within the final product.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Develop and launch an online toolkit specifically designed for the Canadian financial sector, featuring products, guidance and services that fulfil employer responsibilities under the *Accessible Canada Act* while also meeting the talent needs of the sector
- Lead the development of two modules in the toolkit and develop two evidence-based resources: one focused on performance management, and the other on determining the level of and fostering engagement among workers with disabilities
- Bring the community of disability-focused organizations together to collectively support the development of the toolkit and ensure their viewpoints are incorporated into toolkit

**Method:** Qualitative

**Project status:** January 2021- September 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Emile Tompa (Principal Investigator), Alexis Buettgen, Emma Irvin (Research Team), Sara Lacarte (Student), Akshay Mohan (Student), Andrea Gardiola (Student)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW), Business Disability International, Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, Autism Speaks Canada, Barrier Free Saskatchewan, BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society, Inclusion Canada, Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance, Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, Canadian Council of the Blind, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, Canadian Mental Health Association, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Disabled Women's Network of Canada, Every Canadian Counts Coalition, Eviance, Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society, Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities, March of Dimes, Millions Missing Canada, Muscular Dystrophy Canada, National Education Association of Disabled Students, National ME/FM Action Network, Spinal Cord Injury Canada

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Canadian financial sector employers (including managers and human resources professionals), employment service providers who work with jobseekers with disabilities, policymakers focused on employment services for persons with disabilities, and disability community representatives

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1. Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, ESDC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:**

Please see <https://www.crwdp.ca/>

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date.

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date.

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/evidence-informed-workplace-policies-and-practices-for-prevention-of-ptsd-work-disability>

**Reasons for the study:** The prevalence of post-traumatic stress injuries (PTSDs) among first responders is high and often leads to work disability. Recent studies have shown that organizational policies and practices have an important impact on PTSDs; however, the scientific evidence about the effectiveness of PTSD interventions is limited. Regardless of the state of the scientific evidence, first responder organizations must develop ways to protect workers. This project will engage with Alberta first responder stakeholders to co-develop an evidence summary on current, best and effective interventions to manage and prevent PTSDs, to ensure the findings are relevant, and to increase the uptake of this knowledge.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Conduct an environmental scan of international first responder organizations to look for current approaches to PTSD and work disability prevention
- Conduct a review of reviews of the scientific literature
- Conduct interviews and focus groups with Alberta first responder stakeholders to gather current PTSD work disability prevention policies, programs and practices
- Explore and better understand the workplace and organizational policies and practices for preventing and managing PTSDs among first responders
- Synthesize the evidence and from an international environmental scan on PTSDs among first responders
- Improve guidance on workplace policies and practices on preventing and managing PTSDs among first responders, with the ultimate aim of reducing PTSD-related work disability

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** March 2021 – September 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Dwayne Van Eerd, Emile Tompa (Principal Investigators), Emma Irvin, Doug Gross (University of Alberta), Charl Els (University of Alberta), Sebastian Straube (University of Alberta), Suzette Bremault-Phillips (University of Alberta), Nick Carleton (University of Regina) (Research Team), Sabrina Tonima (KTE Lead)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Megan McElheran (WGM Psychological Services Ltd.)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** First responders (police, firefighters, paramedics) in Alberta and other provinces.

**Linkage to Prevention Works:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence; Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, Government of Alberta

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Examining sex/gender differences in exposures to workplace-acquired communicable disease: A systematic review (3405)

**URL:** <https://iwh.on.ca/projects/do-work-exposures-and-their-effects-differ-for-men-and-women-systematic-review>

**Reasons for the study:** In 2019, Canadian women 15 years and older represented nearly half (47.4%) of the labour force, compared to 37.6% in 1976—an increase of over 15%. Yet much of our understanding of work exposures are still male-centric. Social (gender) and biological (sex) differences can affect the health of men and women in different ways. This is particularly true in the case of workplace-acquired communicable diseases (i.e., illnesses caused by an infectious agent). Social factors such as the types of jobs and industries in which men and women work can influence their exposure to communicable diseases. For example, men are more likely to work in outdoor environments (e.g., forestry and farm work) and are more likely to be exposed to tick-borne infections. In the case of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the gendered nature of the frontline and essential workforce can also lead to different infection transmission/exposures in men and women. Biological factors from differences in immunity to infections also can affect how likely men and women are exposed to communicable diseases in their workplaces. While gender/sex considerations are increasingly included in work and health research, it is not often the focus of studies reporting patterns of workplace-acquired communicable disease exposure.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Review the literature to examine whether men and women within the same occupations have different exposures to workplace-acquired communicable diseases
- Identify the occupations and industries in which gender/sex inequalities in work-related communicable disease exposure exist
- Inform primary prevention approaches to ensure men and women are equally protected from workplace-acquired communicable diseases

**Method:** Systematic Review

**Project status:** September 2021 – May 2023

**Research Team and roles:** Aviroop Biswas (Principal Investigator), Emma Irvin, Heather Johnston, Peter Smith, Mieke Koehoorn (UBC), Annalee Yassi (UBC) (Research Team)

**Collaborators and Partners:** AgSafe, Women in Occupational Health & Safety Society, BC Nurses Union, BC Federation of Labour, BC General Employees' Union, WorkSafeBC, Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Primary prevention policy-makers and stakeholders in sectors and industries where vulnerability to disease transmission has been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as health care, agriculture, education, and food supply; groups with an interest in gender and sex issues

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, WorkSafeBC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Programs of early OHS intervention with small businesses: environmental scan and feasibility assessment (3425)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/programs-of-early-ohs-intervention-with-small-businesses>

**Reasons for the study:** Small businesses (SBs) pose a challenge to occupational health and safety (OHS) authorities. They contribute disproportionately to the total burden of work-related injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. That is, their percentage contribution to all occupational injuries is greater than their percentage contribution to worked hours (Holte et al. 2015, Sørensen 2007). As well, they are difficult to reach because of their large number and their informal nature. The proposed project focuses on the needs and challenges of OHS in small businesses. The key knowledge gap the project aims to fill is to discover what OHS interventions (which can be developed into programs) exist for SBs that are feasible and can be implemented as the small business starts up.

**Objectives of the study:**

- This project will identify and describe interventions for Small Businesses that can be implemented early in their formation, found in Canada and other high-income countries.
- Explore the nature of early Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) interventions for SBs in Canada and other high-income countries?
- Determine the feasibility of adopting or adapting these interventions in British Columbia (BC) and Ontario (ON)?

**Method:** Environmental scan

**Project status:** January 2023-January 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Dwayne Van Eerd (Principal Investigator), Emma Irvin, Lynda Robson, Basak Yanar, Morgane Le Pouésard (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Adina Croitoru (Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development), Lucas Friesen (Manufacturing Safety Alliance of British Columbia)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Regulatory authorities and SB employer associations (e.g., Small Business BC) are primary audiences

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence; Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices

**Funded by:** WorkSafeBC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF WORK DISABILITY

The prevention of work disability remains a strong research focus at the Institute for Work & Health, and will continue to address ongoing and emerging issues, including optimal return-to-work (RTW) practices to prevent work disability and workplace environments that meet the needs of workers with health conditions/injuries in order to sustain productivity and prevent work disability. As is the case with our injury prevention research, KTE staff will engage non-research partners—including employers, workers, clinical practitioners, ergonomists, disability managers, RTW coordinators, OHS professionals and more—in many of these research projects to support the ways that research evidence is relevant and used to shape policy and practice.

IWH has conducted actionable research for more than two decades to support improvements in workplace practices to prevent disability. The Institute will continue this commitment in 2023/24. We will continue to focus on workplace accommodations and communications that affect workers across all ages and across a wide range of conditions, from occupational injuries and illnesses to non-occupational episodic and chronic health conditions. Our projects will increase the capacity and confidence of employers to sustainably employ persons with disabilities.

Institute scientific staff have conducted important research over the past decade on the adequacy of workers' compensation benefits and the economic impact of work disability on individuals and households. In 2023/24 we will continue this work describe the long-term outcomes of people with work-related injuries or illnesses after they are no longer engaged with Ontario workers' compensation system, and understanding if, and how, the return-to-work process changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2023/24, our research is addressing the employment participation of young Canadian adults with disabilities, as well as examining how to best future-proof young Canadians with disabilities for the changing labour market. We are expanding our successful use of the project ECHO methodology from work injury to establish a community of practice in which Public Safety Personnel workplace cultural competency can be established

Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A partnership to deliver workplace tools and resources to sustain the employment of people with chronic, episodic conditions (2271)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/accommodating-and-communicating-about-episodic-disabilities-aced-partnership-to-deliver-workplace-resources-to-sustain-employment-of-people-with-chronic-episodic-conditions>

**Reasons for the study:** Many chronic physical and mental health diseases cause episodic disability and not continuous problems. People may have periods of well-managed health punctuated by periods of more severe symptoms that limit activities. These symptoms and limitations are often unpredictable and invisible to others. As such, they create challenges related to communication, disclosure, protection of privacy, and support and accommodations. Privacy legislation has shifted disability management away from disease diagnoses (which workers are not obligated to disclose) to a focus on activity demands and limitations to guide accommodations. The ACED partnership grant aims to enhance the work sustainability of Canadians with chronic, episodic conditions through the development of easily accessed, evidence-based tools, resources and training that protects privacy and facilitates communication and accommodation planning among workers, supervisors and others in the workplace.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Consolidate and enhance existing evidence for toolkit development.
- Develop new evidence-informed resources, including communication tools, job analysis and accommodation planning tools, and skills training materials for supervisors and HR/disability managers.
- Pilot test and evaluate the toolkit in diverse workplaces.
- Expand the evidence base to include greater attention to sex/gender, age/life course, diverse employment contexts and episodic conditions.
- Develop new researcher capacity in disability studies and build new workplace partnerships.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** April 2018 - March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Monique Gignac (Principal Investigator/Project Director), Dorcas Beaton, Curtis Breslin, Emma Irvin, Arif Jetha, Ron Saunders, Peter Smith, Emile Tompa, Dwayne Van Eerd, Renee-Louise Franche (WorkSafeBC), Joy MacDermid (University of Western Ontario), Aaron Thompson (University of Toronto), William Shaw (University of Connecticut Health Center) (Research Team), Julie Bowring (Project Coordinator), Lahmea Navaratnerajah (Research Associate), Sabrina Tonima (KTE Lead)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Arthritis Society of Canada, Canada Life's Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, Crohn's & Colitis Canada, Mindful Employer Canada, Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, MLITSD, Realize Canada, University of Toronto

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles, as well as stakeholder channels and networks and newly established dissemination partners.

As part of our KT activities, we entered our first ACED tool, the Job Demands and Accommodation Planning Tool (JDAPT) into the MaRS-CIBC Inclusive Design Challenge: Support at Work. The ACED team was the Grand Prize Winner (\$50,000), May 2022.

**Target Audience:** Workers with episodic conditions, supervisors, human resources, disability managers and service providers, organizations serving people with episodic conditions, labour representatives, clinicians serving people with disabilities

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1. Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** CIHR, SSHRC, ESDC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Gignac, M.A.M., Bowring, J., Shahidi, F.V., Kristman, V., Cameron, J.I., Jetha, A. (in press). Workplace communication decisions of older workers wanting to remain employed: A qualitative study of factors considered when contemplating revealing or concealing support needs. *Work, Aging & Retirement*, waac029, <https://doi.org/10.1093/workar/waac029>

Gignac, M.A.M., Bowring, J., Tonima, S., Franche, R.-L., Thompson, A., Jetha, A., Smith, P.M., Macdermid, J.C., Shaw, W.S., Van Eerd, D., Beaton, D.E., Irvin, E., Tompa, E., Saunders, R. (2022). A sensibility assessment of the Job Demands and Accommodation Planning Tool (JDAPT): A tool to help workers with an episodic disability plan workplace support. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-022-10057-4>.

Gignac, M. A. M., Shahidi, F. V., Jetha, A., Kristman, V., Bowring, J., Cameron, J., Tonima, S., Ibrahim, S. (2021). Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on health, financial worries, and perceived organizational support among people living with disabilities in Canada. *Disability and Health Journal*, 14(4), 101161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2021.101161>

Gignac, M.A.M., Jetha, A., Martin Ginis, K.A., Ibrahim, S. (2021). Does it matter what your reasons are when deciding to disclose (or not disclose) a disability at work? The association of workers' approach and avoidance goals with perceived positive and negative workplace outcomes. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 31(3):638-651. <https://doi.org/10.1007/a10926-020-09956-1>.

Cheng, L., Jetha, A., Cordeaux, E., Lee, K., Gignac, M.A.M.\* (2021). Workplace challenges, supports, and accommodations for people with inflammatory bowel disease: A scoping review. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 1-13. [Advanced online publication; September 24, 2021]. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2021.1979662/>. \*Corresponding author

Gignac, M.A.M., Bowring, J., Jetha, A., Beaton, D.E., Breslin, F.C., Franche, R.-L., Irvin, E., Macdermid, J.C., Shaw, W.S., Smith, P.M., Thompson, A., Tompa, E., Van Eerd, D., Saunders, R. (2020). Disclosure, privacy and workplace accommodation of episodic disabilities: Organizational perspectives on disability communication-support processes to sustain employment. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 31(1):153-165. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-020-09901-2>.

**Related research summaries:**

Please see <https://aced.iwh.on.ca>

**Related interviews and articles:**

"M-192, Episodic Disabilities." Witness appearing before the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, House of Commons, Government of Canada, December 6, 2018.

"Lack of support at work makes COVID worse for people with disabilities" *Canadian HR Reporter*, August 9, 2021. <https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/lack-of-support-at-work-makes-covid-worse-for-people-with-disabilities/358771>

"Greater focus on episodic disabilities needed: Study" *Canadian HR Reporter*, August 24, 2020.

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/greater-focus-on-episodic-disabilities-needed-study/332638>

Gignac, M. A. M. (2022, November). Long COVID as an Episodic Disability: Implications for Communication, Disclosure & Accommodation Planning. Invited presentation at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN) Conference, "Long-COVID and Episodic Disability: Insights, Impacts, and Inclusion at Work. November 17, Remote.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2022, November). Disclosure & Accommodation Planning - What do we need to improve job retention for people who are living with a disability? Invited presentation at the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) Conference Rethinking Disability at Work Conference 22: The Future of Work, November 14-16, Toronto, ON.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2020). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to the Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo, Wellington, and Dufferin. Making Cent\$ of Abilities, Webinar, November 5, 2020.  
[https://www.workforceplanningboard.com/pdfs/gignac\\_aced\\_workforce\\_planning\\_board\\_nov\\_2020\\_slides\\_to\\_postpdf](https://www.workforceplanningboard.com/pdfs/gignac_aced_workforce_planning_board_nov_2020_slides_to_postpdf)

Gignac, M.A.M. (2022). Workplace communication decisions of older workers wanting to remain employed: A qualitative study. Presented at the Realize Virtual National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment, March 24, 2022

Gignac, M.A.M. (2022). Organizational perspectives on disclosure, privacy, and workplace accommodation of episodic disabilities. Presented at the Realize Virtual National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment, March 29, 2022

Gignac, M. A. M. (2021, October). Working with an episodic disability. Invited speaker for the MS Can Be Summit. Virtual Meeting, October 1, 2021.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnfXoepTkkQ&list=PL2rqY0xxHmw0Yj0e0FtFwbPZaqHSEPPpSy&index=2>

Gignac, M. A. M. (2021, March). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): Workplace Challenges and Solutions. Invited speaker for the Managing Your Duty to Accommodate Virtual Conference. Infonex Professional Development, March 30, 2021.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2021, March). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED). Invited speaker for the Virtual National Summit on Episodic Disabilities and Employment. Hosted by Realize Canada. March 23, 2021.

Cheng, L. & Gignac, M. A. M. (2020, October). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to Crohn's and Colitis Canada, Lunch and Learn Seminar Series. Webinar, October 14, 2020.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2020, May). Accommodating episodic disabilities: The latest law and research. Lancaster House Audio Conference, May 14, 2020. Toronto, ON.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2019, December). Panel discussion: From evidence to policy change. Invited speaker/panel presenter at the annual endMS Conference, December 8-12, 2019. Calgary, Alta.

Gignac, M.A.M., Bowring, J., Breslin, C., Jetha, A., Van Eerd, D., Irvin, E., Franche, R-L., Smith, P., Tompa, E., Beaton, D., Saunders, R. (2019, June). Challenges in accommodating mental and physical health conditions: What workplace parties are saying. Podium presentation at the Work Disability Prevention and Integration Conference 2019. June 4-7, Odense, Denmark.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2019, June). Arthritis at Work: The Science Behind Accommodations. Launch of Arthritis Society resources hosted by the TD Bank. Toronto, ON.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2018, September). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to the national Board of Directors, Arthritis Society, Toronto, ON.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2018, February). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to the national partnership meeting of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Toronto, ON.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2020). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to Epilepsy Toronto, Workplace Workshop Series. Webinar, September 24, 2020.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2020). Accommodating and Communicating about Episodic Disabilities (ACED): A Partnership to Deliver Workplace Tools and Resources to Sustain the Employment of People with Chronic, Episodic Conditions. Invited presentation to the Occupational Health Rounds at St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto. Webinar, October 21, 2020.

Gignac, M.A.M. (2019, April). Challenges in accommodating mental and physical health conditions: What workplace parties are saying. Occupational and Environmental Health speaker series presentation, University of Toronto. April 5, 2019, Toronto, ON.

#### **IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

Gignac, M. A. M. (2022). What do workplaces need to know to help older workers stay on the job? A qualitative study of older workers' disclosure decisions. Open plenary for the Institute for Work & Health's Speaker Series Webinar, September 20, 2022.

Gignac, M. A. M. (2020). Does it matter what workers' reasons are for disclosing or not disclosing an episodic disability at work? Open plenary for the Institute for Work & Health's Speaker Series Webinar, November 24, 2020.

Gignac, M.A.M. (2018, June). Challenges in accommodating mental and physical health conditions: What workplace parties are saying. IWH Speaker Series' Presentation. June 5, 2018, Toronto, ON.

Financial incentives to promote employment of people with disabilities: when and how do they work best? (2297)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/financial-incentives-to-promote-employment-of-people-with-disabilities-when-and-how-they-work-best>

**Reasons for the study:** Financial incentives (FIs) for employers to recruit, retain and promote persons with disabilities take many forms. They are used in Canada and elsewhere to address low rates of employment among people with disabilities. In Canada, the federal government directly operates programs in this domain and supports other initiatives through transfer payments to the provinces. The funds allocated to employment support activities are substantial. However, little research has been done examining how and when financial incentives work to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Develop a map of the Canadian FIs policy arena and the key stakeholders who engage in it with details of the characteristics of program offerings and funds allocated
- Undertake an international environmental scan of good practices in the use of FIs
- Develop case studies using qualitative and quantitative methods that contextualize how and when FIs work well or do not work well and why
- Develop contextualized, evidence-informed resources for stakeholders (including government and employer representatives) on best practices in the use of FIs

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** October 2017 - March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Emile Tompa, Rebecca Gewurtz/McMaster University (Principal Investigators), Emma Irvin, Heather Johnston, Cindy Moser, Dan Samosh (Research Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Maureen Haan/CCRW, Michael MacDonald/Jazz Aviation, Abdou Saouab (ESDC), Bob Vansickle (Independent Consultant)

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Federal and provincial/territorial governments and policymakers, service providers who provide job development, matching and support services for workers with disabilities and employers.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, SSHRC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:**

Funding Employment Services to Create Sustainable Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities: A Policy Issues Briefing for Program Funders  
[https://www.iwh.on.ca/sites/iwh/files/iwh/reports/iwh\\_report\\_funding\\_employment\\_services\\_for\\_persons\\_with\\_disabilities\\_2022.pdf](https://www.iwh.on.ca/sites/iwh/files/iwh/reports/iwh_report_funding_employment_services_for_persons_with_disabilities_2022.pdf)

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Preventing work disability among millennial young adults with rheumatic disease (2310)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/preventing-work-disability-among-millennial-young-adults-with-rheumatic-disease>

**Reasons for the study:** Despite advances in clinical care, millennial young adults (born 1982-1999) with rheumatic disease (e.g., arthritis) continue to report difficulties finding employment and staying productive at work. Previous research suggests that workplace policies and practices play an important role in supporting the employment of people with rheumatic disease, but because this research tended to focus on older adults with rheumatic disease, it is unclear if millennial young adults with rheumatic disease who are just beginning their career have the same needs or access workplace support. This study is one of the first to examine the needs of millennials with rheumatic disease within the workplace.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Conduct a longitudinal survey of 365-plus millennials with rheumatic disease
- Identify the workplace supports needed by millennial young adults with rheumatic disease and the extent to which these supports are available and used
- Examine characteristics of millennial young adults with rheumatic disease and how their work conditions relate to unmet workplace support needs
- Assess if those who report greater unmet workplace support needs are more likely to indicate difficulties with employment
- Examine whether work conditions affect the relationship between unmet workplace support needs and difficulties with employment
- Offer concrete messages and strategies that workplaces can use to encourage the employment participation of millennial young adults with rheumatic disease
- Offer information to service providers to help them provide recommendations to adolescents with rheumatic disease who are preparing to enter the labour market

**Method:** Qualitative

**Project status:** January 2018-December 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Arif Jetha (Principal Investigator), Catherine Backman (UBC), Monique Gignac, Vicki Kristman (Lakehead University), Laurie Proulx (Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance), Lori Tucker (UBC) (Research Team), Lahmea Navaratnerajah (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance, Arthritis Society, Cassie + Friends

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Millennials with rheumatic disease, employers and human resources professionals, clinicians, rehabilitation professionals, community agencies serving people with arthritis

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, Arthritis Society

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Ontario Life After Work Injury Study II: Understanding the long-term recovery and labour market outcomes of injured workers in the shadow of COVID-19 (2321)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/ontario-life-after-work-injury-study-understanding-long-term-recovery-and-labour-market-outcomes-of-injured-workers-in-shadow-of-covid-19>

**Reasons for the study:** The purpose of this study is to describe the long-term outcomes affecting people with work related injuries or illnesses after they are no longer engaged with the Ontario workers' compensation system. Lost-time claimants invited to participate in this study experienced a disabling work-related injury or illness in January/February 2020. This group of lost-time claimants experienced recovery and return-to-work in the shadow cast by the COVID-19 emergency. The study will compare health and labour market outcomes 18 months following a work-related injury or illness in this cohort of 700 lost-time claimants to the experience of 1,100 lost-time claimants whose recovery and return-to-work occurred before the COVID-19 emergency. Lost-time claimant recruitment commenced in September 2021 and was completed in November 2021.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Recruit 700 lost-time claim beneficiaries who experienced a work-related injury or illness in January or February 2020 and conduct an interviewer-administered survey to collect information on: RTW and labour market status; sources of income; function, recovery and other health outcomes; perceptions of the fairness of the claim and RTW process; interactions between the claimant, their workplace and their health-care providers; and pre-injury information on occupation, earnings, industry and workplace size, as well as basic socio-demographic characteristics
- Conduct descriptive and regression analyses to identify the modifiable and non-modifiable factors within the cohort that are associated with poor health and recovery outcomes at 18 months and that are associated with better or worse labour market outcomes at 18 months
- Compare results with those from the original Ontario Life After Work Injury Study, whose recovery and RTW occurred before the onset of the pandemic

**Method:** Quantitative

**Project status:** July 2021 – June 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Cameron Mustard (Principal Investigator), Nancy Carnide, Kathleen Dobson, Peter Smith, Emile Tompa (Research Team), Colette Severin (Project Coordinator).

**Collaborators and Partners:** WSIB

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** WSIB decision-makers, representatives of injured workers, administrators of other work disability insurance programs in Canada

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, WSIB

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Dobson K, Mustard C, Carnide N, Furlan AD, Smith PM. Impact of persistent pain symptoms on work absence, health status and employment 18 months following disabling work-related injury or illness. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. 2022;79(10):697-705. doi:10.1136/oemed-2022-108383.

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

Persistent pain: its role in work absence, health, and employment after a disabling work-related injury.  
IWH Speaker Series. November 15, 2022.

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/future-proofing-young-canadians-with-disabilities-for-changing-labour-market>

**Reasons for the study:** In industrialized countries the future of work is characterized by rising automation and digitization of jobs, increased exposure to precarious work, growing employment in the gig and sharing economies, and ecological and sociopolitical changes. The future of work has the potential to create new challenges that disproportionality affects vulnerable labour market subgroups including young workers and people living with disabilities. In this study, we apply strategic foresight methodologies to systematically examine the future of work as it relates to young people with disabilities. Findings will inform the design of future-proofed policies and programs for young people with disabilities, that can be implemented in the present, to address the anticipated shocks and stresses of the future of work. Designing strategies that anticipate changes in work and labour market conditions represents an important direction in social and public health policy that can shape pathways to better health for the working population.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Construct medium-to-long-term views of the future of work as it relates to young people with disabilities
- Inform the design of future-proofing policies and programs that can be implemented now to address the anticipated shocks and stresses of the future of work for young people with disabilities.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** March 2019 – December 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Arif Jetha (Principal Investigator), Monique Gignac, Peter Smith, Emile Tompa, (Research Team), Hela Bakhtari (Project Coordinator), Kay Nasir (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** ESDC, CCRW, City of Toronto's Civic Innovation Office, Education at Work Ontario

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles. Scenarios have been built in collaboration with key knowledge users.

**Target Audience:** Policy-makers, people with disabilities, employers, social innovation groups, employment service providers

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, New Frontiers in Research Fund

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Jetha A, Shamaee A, Bonaccio S, Gignac MA, Tucker LB, Tompa E, Bultmann U, Norman CD, Banks CG, Smith PM. [Fragmentation in the future of work: a horizon scan examining the impact of the changing nature of work on workers experiencing vulnerability](#). American Journal of Industrial Medicine. 2021;64(8):649-666. [doi:10.1002/ajim.23262](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.23262)

**Related research summaries:**

Jetha A, Shamaee A. [Fragmentation in the future of work](#). Institute for Work & Health; 2021.

**Related interviews and articles:**

What is the future of work? Global News Morning Live TV. 2022. [I struggled with office life. Now others are alive to benefits of remote working.](#) The Guardian. 2021

[Nine trends that will likely shape future of work for groups of vulnerable workers.](#) At Work: Institute for Work & Health; No. 104, Spring 2021.

[Canadian workers aren't too worried about robots taking their jobs, web survey finds.](#) Toronto Star. December 14, 2020. Available from: <https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2020/09/16/canadian-workers-arent-too-worried-about-robots-taking-their-jobs-web-survey-finds.html>

[The future of work will hit vulnerable people the hardest.](#) The Conversation. March 2, 2020.

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:**

[What the future of work looks like to young people with disabilities.](#) IWH Speaker Series. December 14, 2021.

[Fragmentation in the future of work: Exploring the impact of the changing nature of work on vulnerable workers.](#) IWH Speaker Series. February 23, 2021.

## Future-focused job accommodation practices for the school-to-work transition (2340)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/future-focused-job-accommodation-practices-for-school-to-work-transition-0>

**Reasons for the study:** The future of work is characterized by diverse social, technological, economic, environmental and political changes (e.g., artificial intelligence and the automation of jobs, an aging workforce, climate change) that are expected to disrupt every industry, transforming working conditions, and affecting the types and availability of jobs. Young people with disabilities who are transitioning from school to work are especially vulnerable to the complex barriers posed by a rapidly changing labour market. Studies indicate that the school-to-work transition is particularly challenging for the two million young people (aged 18-35 years of age) living with a disability in Canada. Job accommodations are essential for young people with disabilities to find and sustain employment and career advancement during the school-to-work transition. However, a recent survey of young people with disabilities in Canada found that most perceived a number of barriers to accessing job accommodations. Difficulties faced by young people during the school-to-work transition can have a lasting effect and contribute to adverse labour market outcomes (e.g., underemployment, lost productivity) that extend across one's working life. The future of work may create the need for innovative job accommodations and workplace supports.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- Better understand specific job accommodations that can enhance the school-to-work transition
- Better understand the emerging barriers that young people with disabilities could face in accessing needed job accommodations within the changing world of work
- Generate future-oriented and proactive evidence regarding the school-to-work transition of young people with disabilities and advance knowledge of job accommodation practices

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** March 2020 – April 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Arif Jetha (Principal investigator), Monique Gignac, Emile Tompa, Dwayne Van Eerd; Kathleen Martin Ginis (University of British Columbia) (Research Team), Kay Nasir (Project Coordinator), Sara MacDonald (KTE Lead)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Abilities Centre, CCRW, National Educational Association for Disabled Students

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Employers, educators, employment service providers, policy-makers, subject-matter experts (disability, strategic foresight), young adults with disabilities and their families

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, Accessibility Standards Canada

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):**

Jetha A, Nasir K, Van Eerd D, Gignac MA, Martin Ginis KA, Tompa E. [Inclusion of young people with disabilities in the future of work: forecasting workplace, labour market and community-based strategies through an online and accessible Delphi survey protocol](#). *BMJ Open*. 2022;12(7):e055452. [doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2021-055452](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-055452)

**Related research summaries:**

[Strategies to ensure young persons with disabilities are included in the future of work](#). Institute for Work & Health; 2022. (Interim report)

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date.

**Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Developing a framework for measuring culture change related to accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities (2345)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/developing-framework-for-measuring-culture-change-related-to-accessibility-and-inclusion-of-persons-with-disabilities>

**Reasons for the study:** Research shows that people with disabilities are often not permitted to, and/or are prevented from, participating in various activities in society, including employment. This exclusion can be partly attributed to various barriers and forms of discrimination described as institutional, environmental and attitudinal. These forms of discrimination work to exclude people through institutions' day-to-day interactions, lack of accessibility, and prevailing attitudes. There is a need for culture change to make a substantive and sustainable change. However, without clear and robust measures to track culture change and outcomes, it is difficult to see the impact of efforts related to advancing social inclusion and accessibility. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive list of indicators of culture change that can be used to measure progress in achieving targets set out in the *Accessible Canada Act* and gauge improvements in accessibility and inclusion of persons with disability in all facets of society.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Conduct a scoping review involving a rapid review of peer-reviewed and grey literatures
- Conduct an environmental scan in the form of discussions with stakeholders in Canada and experts in other jurisdictions
- Develop a conceptual framework and measurement protocol for culture change relevant to accessibility and inclusion of persons with disability, with a focus on the priority domains in the *Accessible Canada Act*, including “employment”—one of the domains
- Document gaps in data sources and develop strategies to fill them

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** April 2020 - December 2023

**Research Team and roles:** Emile Tompa (Principal Investigator) Emma Irvin, Amir Mofidi; Rebecca Gewurtz (McMaster University) (Research Team), Sabrina Imam (Project Coordinator), Basil Southey (Student)

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** ESDC

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments and policymakers, employers, educators, healthcare and other services providers, public at large

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, ESDC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:**

Please see <https://www.crwdp.ca/>

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date.

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date.

Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA): A social innovation lab to increase demand-side capacity to employ persons with disabilities in Canada (2405)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/inclusive-design-for-employment-access-idea-social-innovation-lab-to-increase-demand-side-capacity-to-employ-persons-with-disabilities-in-canada>

**Reasons for the study:** Talented people are all too often excluded from equal opportunities and choices in careers, jobs and work because they are ‘different.’ That is frequently the case for the 20% of the Canadian population who are persons with disabilities (PWDs). They have disproportionately poorer employment outcomes, even with appropriate qualifications and work readiness. Despite efforts to improve their employment levels by governments and other stakeholders, labour-force participation rates of PWDs in Canada remain substantially lower than persons without disabilities—59% compared to 80%. Among those working, many remain stuck in entry-level, low paying, precarious employment—experiences that give rise to instability, lack of protection, insecurity, and social and economic vulnerability. These challenges are compounded for PWDs from marginalized groups, who face additional systemic barriers to secure employment, based on their gender, sexual orientation, and/or racial identity.

Traditionally, programs and research on employment of PWDs in Canada and internationally have focused on preparing individuals for employment. However, little attention has been given to employer attitudes towards, interest in, and capacity for hiring and accommodating PWDs. Without attention to employer needs and improving the literacy of workplace stakeholders on inclusive practices, the fundamental context of the workplace will remain unchanged, and barriers and assumptions unchallenged.

In this project, we are proposing a new framework for a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to applied research in work disability policy and practice in the form of a social innovation laboratory we are calling Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA), which will focus on building capacity for sustainable and rewarding employment opportunities for PWDs. By drawing on knowledge from rehabilitation science, disability and social policy, design and technology, management, economics, and program evaluation, we are better poised to tackle the complex challenges of this arena.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Expand demand-side capacity across the Canadian economy so employers can capitalize on the diverse talents of PWDs;
- Increase accessibility and inclusiveness of Canadian labour markets such that PWDs have equal opportunities and choices in careers, jobs, and work as persons without disabilities; and
- Establish a best-practice methodology and capacity for co-designing solutions in the work disability policy arena.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** October 2021- September 2027

**Research Team and Roles:** Emile Tompa(Nominated Principal Investigator), Rebecca Gewrutz (McMaster University) (Co-Principal Investigator), Alexis Buettgen, Emma Irvin, Arif Jetha, Dwayne Van Eerd, Bruce Bonyhady, Susanne Bruyere, Peter Coppin, Marie-France Coutu, Robert Fleisig, Raphael Gomez, Karen Harlos, Takeo Kondo, Vicki Kristman, Marie Laberge, Jordana Maisel, Carrie Anne Marshall, Valérie Martin, Sandra Moll, Dan Samosh, Firat Sayin, Jennifer Smith-Merry, Mahadeo Sukhai, Hélène Sultan-Taieb, Jutta Treviranus, Angelika Veres, Catherine Wyndham-West.(Research Team).

**Collaboration and Partners:** Flavio Volpe (Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association), Collinda Joseph (Accessibility Standards Canada), Maria Ash (CNIB), David Brown (CIBC), Wendy Cukier (Diversity Institute), Joseph Giulione (L’Arrimage), Carmine Tiano (Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario), Cindy Moser (IWH), Sari Sairanen (Unifor), Boris Vukovic (Carleton

Technology and Training Centre), Steven Tobin (Labour Market Information Council), Drew Sousa (Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association), Krista Carr (Inclusions Canada), Michael MacDonald (Jazz Aviation), Abdou Saouab (ESDC), Frank Smith (National Educational Association of Disabled Students), Don Gallant (Ready, Willing and Able), Victoria Smallman (Canadian Labour Congress), Francis Fung (March of Dimes), Emmanuelle Lopez-Bastos (United Food and Commercial Workers), Maureen Haan (CCRW), Leah Nord (Canadian Chamber of Commerce), Ian Graham (Ottawa Hospital Research Institute).

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Canadian work disability policy system stakeholders, including injured worker/disability community representatives, employers, policymakers, disability program administrators, educators and service providers.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3; Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence.

**Funded by:** MLITSD, New Frontiers in Research Fund Transformation Stream (a Tri-Council initiative among Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC))

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:**

McMaster researchers ready to reimagine workplaces for employees with disabilities (January 12, 2022) <https://brighterworld.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-researchers-ready-to-reimagine-workplaces-for-disabled-employees/>

Social innovation lab at McMaster and IWH focuses on innovations that build up employers' capacity to employ persons with disabilities (August 23, 2022) <https://www.iwh.on.ca/newsletters/at-work/109/new-initiative-skills-up-employers-to-hire-promote-support-workers-with-disabilities>

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA): A social innovation lab to increase demand-side capacity to employ persons with disabilities in Canada: Evidence Synthesis (2407)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/inclusive-design-for-employment-access-idea-evidence-synthesis>

**Description:** Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) is a social innovation lab at McMaster University that focuses on the employment of persons with disabilities. It was recently funded for six years by the New Frontiers in Research Fund Transformation Stream, administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The activities of the IDEA laboratory are focused on advancing knowledge and practice on how workplaces and related systems can be better designed to support full inclusion of persons with disabilities, including the social aspects of employment. Knowledge synthesis is one of four activity areas that will support tool and resource development across all hubs through the 5-Step Signature Methodology of the project. The Knowledge synthesis activity will build upon rapid review methods developed by the Institute for Work & Health through collaboration with other Evidence synthesis centres e.g., McMaster Health Forum.

**Objectives:**

- Build methodological capacity through the hub members to conduct rapid evidence syntheses and environmental scans
- Identify issues through rapid review methods and environmental scans of needs/challenges, knowledge gaps, existing evidence-informed tools and promising practices
- Conduct an environmental scan to find out what wrap around supports are and how they are used in different contexts

**Method:** Environmental scan, scoping review, systematic review

**Project status:** September 2022 – September 2027

**Research Team and Roles:** Emile Tompa, Rebecca Gewrutz (McMaster University) (Principal Investigators), Alexis Buettgen, Emma Irvin, Arif Jetha, Sara Lacarte, Amir Mofidi, Dan Samosh, Dwayne Van Eerd, Bruce Bonyhady, Susanne Bruyere, Peter Coppin, Marie-France Coutu, Robert Fleisig, Raphael Gomez, Karen Harlos, Takeo Kondo, Vicki Kristman, Marie Laberge, Jordana Maisel, Carrie Anne Marshall, Sandra Moll, Firat Sayin, Jennifer Smith-Merry, Mahadeo Sukhai, H el ene Sultan-Taieb, Jutta Treviranus, Angelika Veres, Catherine Wyndham-West.(Research Team), Basil Southey (Student).

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** Flavio Volpe (Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association), Collinda Joseph (Accessibility Standards Canada), Maria Ash (CNIB), David Brown (CIBC), Wendy Cukier (Diversity Institute), Joseph Giulione (L'Arrimage), Carmine Tiano (Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario), Cindy Moser (IWH), Sari Sairanen (Unifor), Boris Vukovic (Carleton Technology and Training Centre), Steven Tobin (Labour Market Information Council), Drew Sousa (Ontario Occupational Health Nurses Association), Krista Carr (Inclusions Canada), Michael MacDonald (Jazz Aviation), Abdou Saouab (ESDC), Frank Smith (National Educational Association of Disabled Students), Don Gallant (Ready, Willing and Able), Victoria Smallman (Canadian Labour Congress), Francis Fung (March of Dimes), Emmanuelle Lopez-Bastos (United Food and Commercial Workers), Maureen Haan (CCRW), Leah Nord (Canadian Chamber of Commerce), Ian Graham (Ottawa Hospital Research Institute).

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Canadian work disability policy system stakeholders, including injured worker/ disability community representatives, employers, policy-makers, disability program administrators, educators and service providers

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 3; Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence, Objective 4: Make OHS easier for small businesses

**Funded by:** MLITSD, New Frontiers in Research Fund (a Tri-Council initiative among CIHR, SSHRC and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council)

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

What are the long-term health and labour market outcomes of workers who experienced work-related COVID-19 transmission? (2410)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/what-are-long-term-health-and-labour-market-outcomes-of-workers-who-experienced-work-related-covid-19-transmission>

**Description:** Canadians who have acquired COVID-19 at work likely experience unique circumstances that could influence how well they recover physically, how they fare emotionally, and their process of returning to the setting where their infection occurred. Yet, we know virtually nothing about the recovery experiences of workers with work-related COVID-19 infections, representing an important knowledge gap for a vulnerable population subgroup. Our proposed project will fill this gap.

**Objectives:**

- Survey a sample of workers who acquired COVID-19 in the course of their employment, approximately 18 months after their initial absence from work.
- What is the prevalence of depression, anxiety, self-rated health and physical functioning among people who experienced work-related COVID-19 transmission?
- Among people who experienced work-related COVID-19 transmission what proportion are back at work, in the same occupation with the same employer?
- What factors, at the system, workplace, healthcare provider and individual level are associated with RTW and health outcomes following work-related COVID-19 transmission?
- Do health and RTW outcomes differ between workers who acquired COVID-19 at work compared to workers who sustained a non-COVID-19 work-related injury or illness around the same time? To what extent are these differences explained by differences in the RTW process?

**Method:** Cross-sectional study linked to workers' compensation claim data

**Project status:** April 2022- April 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Peter Smith (Principal Investigator), Nancy Carnide, Arif Jetha, Cameron Mustard, Mieke Koehoorn (UBC), Cheryl Peters (U Alberta) (Research Team) Colette Severin (Analyst), Victoria Nadalin (Analyst).

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** WSIB

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, Primary prevention policy-makers, Labour, Employers

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** CIHR

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

Intelligent machines and human worker inequities: Examining the implications of artificial intelligence in the workplace (2415)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/intelligent-machines-and-human-worker-inequities-examining-implications-of-ai-in-workplace>

**Reasons for the study:** There is a critical need for transdisciplinary and partnered research to unpack how workplace AI (Artificial Intelligence) applications can contribute to worker inequities and to innovate strategies that protect vulnerable workers. AI is rapidly transforming all aspects of work. However, it is unclear in what ways AI will impact existing worker inequities. It is estimated that when compared to past periods of technological change (e.g., Industrial Revolution), advanced technologies like AI are disrupting work at a 10 times faster rate and at 300 times greater scale. This study applies an equity lens to the analysis of this technological and socio-economic development, and to the best of our knowledge, is the first of its kind. The study looks to examine and synthesize diverse evidence sources to build a framework of how workplace AI applications affect working conditions in ways that contribute to worker inequities. The work will also focus on developing an analytical process to estimate the proportion of Canadian occupations and industry sectors affected by AI and identify groups of vulnerable workers. Lastly, this study will review existing public policies and programs to determine the extent to which supports for workers address the growing application of AI and its impact on vulnerable workers.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Illuminate the impact of AI on both working conditions and workers, estimate the reach of these impacts on occupations and populations, and determine the extent to which existing workers' supports address these disparities.
- Build capacity, co-design the approach through stakeholder engagement, and develop a team who have expertise at the intersection of work, equity, and AI.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** May 2022 - May 2025

**Research Team and Roles:** Arif Jetha (Principal Investigator), Aviroop Biswas, Monique Gignac, Emma Irvin, Peter Smith, Faraz Vahid Shahidi, ; Silvia Bonaccio (University of Ottawa), Jack Dennerlein (Northeastern University), Marc Frenette (Statistics Canada), Marlène Koffi (University of Toronto), Peter Loewen (University of Toronto), Naimul Mefraz Khan (Toronto Metropolitan University), Laura Rosella (University of Toronto), Brendan Smith (Public Health Ontario), Maxwell Smith (Western University), ; , Nicole Wu (University of Toronto), Daniyal Zuberi (University of Toronto); (Research Team), Hela Bakhtari (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Blueprint-ADE; Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship; Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters; Center for Work, Health, and Well-being at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Future Skills Centre; Institute for Work and Health; Labour Market Information Council; Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario); Responsible Artificial Intelligence Toronto Metropolitan University; Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society; Statistics Canada; Unifor; United Steelworkers

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Partners participated in an agenda setting meeting to help generate key priority areas which will inform subsequent phases of the research. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** This project will produce evidence relevant to diverse academic and non-academic target audiences, the latter including labour market policymakers, employers, workers, and their representatives.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** SSHRC, Future Skills Centre

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** Note to date

Pilot Project ECHO Ontario to promote Return-To-Work among Public Safety Personnel (ECHO RTW PSP) (2420)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/echo-psp-piloting-use-of-echo-model-to-promote-recovery-and-return-to-work-among-public-safety-personnel-in-ontario>

**Reasons for the study:** There is a high incidence of occupational mental health injury among Public Safety Personnel (PSP) that puts them at risk of work disability and poor return-to-work outcomes. Clinicians in primary care, including psychologists, family physicians, occupational therapists, social workers, and psychiatrists often lack the opportunity to better understand PSP's unique work cultures to optimize support of PSP at work, or in return-to-work, after an illness or injury. We are proposing the use of ECHO methodology to establish a community of practice in which PSP workplace cultural competency can be established. To do this, we will be including clinicians and stakeholders who support PSP in reintegration and return to work.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Develop an ECHO for return-to-work (RTW) among PSP, including firefighters, paramedics, corrections, and police
- Successfully train experts to participate as HUB members, and to recruit healthcare providers in primary care, occupational health, and mental health providers to attend and present cases in ECHO
- Evaluate the implementation and performance of ECHO RTW PSP in Ontario

**Method:** Telemedicine, qualitative

**Project status:** January 2023- December 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Andrea Furlan, Nadia Aleem (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) (Co-Principal Investigator), Emma Irvin, Colette Severin, Emile Tompa, Dwayne Van Eerd, (Research Team), Shireen Harbin (Project Coordinator)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Partners include the ECHO Ontario Superhub and the ECHO Institute at the University of New Mexico.

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Clinicians in primary care, including psychologists, family physicians, occupational therapists, social workers, and psychiatrists, injured workers, workplace parties.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence, Objective 2: Improve OHS knowledge and practices, Objective 3: Support workplace parties to fulfil their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence

**Funded by:** WSIB

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## First Responder Mental Health Treatment Services: Formative evaluation of a pilot program (2425)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/first-responder-mental-health-treatment-services-formative-evaluation-of-pilot-program>

**Reasons for the study:** The Ontario Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) has contracted with Trillium Health / Insight Health Solutions (IHS) to establish a mental health assessment and treatment specialty pilot program for first responders with an accepted compensation claim arising from post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression or substance use disorder. IWH and the Institute for Better Health (IBH) will collaborate in a formative evaluation of this pilot program to describe the extent to which the program is addressing perceived needs as experienced by First Responder participants in the FRMHT program. The formative evaluation methods will also collect observations from clinical staff on features of program implementation, will conduct analysis of longitudinal clinical measures and will collect both qualitative and quantitative information from representatives of first responder employers to understand the challenges and opportunities in accommodating a first responder's return-to-work following treatment for PTSD.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The formative evaluation has four components. Two will be led by IBH:

- Component 1: Interviews with clinical providers regarding program suitability and effectiveness in meeting and supporting client needs
- Component 2: Interviews with first-responder clients regarding program appropriateness, suitability and effectiveness.
- And two will be led by IWH
- Component 3: Quantitative analysis of client clinical measures as indicators of progress in the program
- Component 4: Interviews with employers to understand perspectives on supporting return to work among first-responders in treatment for PTSI.

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** September 2022 – August 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Cameron Mustard; Walter Wodchis (DLSPH) (Principal Investigators), Kathleen Dobson, Basak Yanar (Research Team)

**Collaborators and Partners:** Institute for Better (Health Trillium Health Partners), WSIB

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Associations representing Ontario first-responder employees and Schedule 2 employers of first-responders in Ontario.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** WSIB

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories:** Yes

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

Addressing knowledge gaps about skills of persons with disabilities (3410)

**URL:** <https://www.iwh.on.ca/projects/addressing-knowledge-gaps-about-skills-of-persons-with-disabilities>

**Reasons for the study:** There is currently little to no information on the foundational and transferable skill levels of persons with disabilities (PWDs). This project aims to fill this knowledge gap.

**Objectives of the study:**

- Determine what we do and do not know about the foundational and transferable skill levels and employment outcomes for PWDs and recommend ways to fill the knowledge gaps
- Conduct a literature review of existing research contained in demographic profiles developed by the Office of Skills for Success
- Determine the main barriers faced by PWDs in increasing their skill levels and further integrating into the labour market
- Determine if women with disabilities face additional barriers and, if so, what these barriers are
- Find proven or promising practices or avenues to increase skill levels of PWS and to reduce the barriers they face in doing so
- Understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the skill development and labour market barriers of PWDs including the long-term implications of the pandemic on the future of PWDs and their skill development and labour market barriers

**Method:** Multi-method study

**Project status:** October 2021 - December 2023

**Research Team and Roles:** Emile Tompa (Principal Investigator), Alexis Buettgen, Emma Irvin, Amir Mofidi, Rebecca Gewurtz (McMaster University) (Research Team), Basil Southey (Student).

**Collaboration and Partners:** ESDC

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH, CRWDP (Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy) and IDEA (Inclusive Design for Employment Access) communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Canadian work disability policy system stakeholders, including injured worker/ disability community representatives, employers, policymakers, disability program administrators, service providers and educators.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD, ESDC

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date.

**Related research summaries:**

Please see <https://www.crdp.ca/>

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date.

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date.

## Emerging Technologies in Occupational Health and Safety (3415/3420)

**URL:** currently not available

**Description:** The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)'s Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2021-2026 sets out the vision of an Ontario where workplaces regularly promote and practice health and safety and are free from occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities. The first objective in the strategy commits to building and using the best evidence to underpin prevention and compliance initiatives that make measurable contributions to preventing injuries, illnesses and fatalities. Along with building research capacity in conducting primary studies in evaluating prevention activities, a key component of achieving this objective is to collate and consolidate research findings where evidence is already available.

These projects outline initiatives to synthesize research evidence on topics that have been identified as priorities to support the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Strategy 2021-2026.

**Objectives:**

- Undertake evidence syntheses to answer research questions provided by the MLITSD. Please note that the questions will be refined through consultation with funder/stakeholders

**Method:** Environmental scan, scoping review, systematic review

**Project status:** April 2023-March 2024

**Research Team and Roles:** Emma Irvin (Principal Investigator); Morgane Le Pouesard (Research Associate).

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** Collaborators – MLITSD and prevention system partners TBD based on research questions

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, TBD by research questions

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Objective 1: Build and use the best evidence

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** None to date

**Related interviews and articles:** None to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** None to date

## Methodological developments in evidence synthesis (0951)

**URL:** not applicable

**Description:** IWH is committed to continuously improving the field of evidence synthesis methodology. In 2023, we propose to initiate, undertake, and advance the following methods projects: piloting of environmental scan methods, refinement of realist and rapid review methods, updating evidence synthesis algorithm, method-related artificial intelligence projects, update IWH Systematic Review and Knowledge Transfer methods papers and environmental scan of OHS in culturally diverse workplaces and scoping review with EPID@work.

**Objectives:**

- Pilot a methodology for environmental scans
- Refine realist and rapid review methods
- Continue to teach evidence synthesis methods to system partners

**Method:** Not applicable

**Project status:** Not applicable

**Research Team and Roles:** Emma Irvin, Morgane Le Pouesard, Dwayne Van Eerd (Institute Coordinators), Nancy Carnide, Andrea Furlan, Joanna Liu, Heather Johnston, Maggie Tiong, Basak Yanar, Jill Hayden (Dalhousie University), Jo Jordan (Keele University), Maurits Van Tulder (VU, Amsterdam) (**Research Team**)

**Collaboration and Partnerships:** Partners in this project include external researchers, WSIB, clinicians, and policy-makers.

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** MLITSD, provincial system partners, research community

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER & EXCHANGE (KTE) & COMMUNICATIONS

At the Institute for Work & Health, knowledge transfer & exchange (KTE) is a process by which research information is made available and accessible through interactive engagement with stakeholders for awareness, practice, planning and policy-making. KTE at IWH is integrated into the research process. Stakeholders are involved in helping us identify research priorities and frame research questions. They help us communicate findings in ways and through channels that are useful for policy and practice.

In conjunction with KTE processes is a corporate communications strategy that ensures the Institute brand is seen as a trusted and reliable source of evidence-based information. Communications strategies ensure our projects, findings, resources and events are known to, understood by and applicable to a growing number of stakeholders in the workplace health, safety and disability prevention arenas.

KTE and communications activities also actively work to build capacity in our audiences to understand and use research evidence.

The target audiences for the Institute's research include policy-makers (provincial and federal labour ministries, workers' compensation agencies), health and safety associations, workplace parties (labour and employers), occupational health, safety and disability management professionals, and health practitioners.

2023/24 KTE and communications activities that are tied to specific projects are reported with those projects in the previous section. Listed in this section are system- and organization-wide KTE and communications activities that are not project-specific.

The work of IWH's KTE and Communications Departments is focused on strategic goals of building and maintaining excellence in three areas:

- 1. Relationships:** *Strengthening stakeholder networks and relationships to enhance the applicability and uptake of IWH research.* KTE creates formal and informal networks of stakeholders and works with intermediary organizations (health and safety associations, professional organizations, employer associations and labour groups) to build and sustain stakeholder engagement and interest in research findings for use in practice and policy. We attend a variety of conferences and events to present IWH research messages and to raise awareness about IWH, developing new connections with a wide variety of professionals who can use IWH in policy and practice.
- 2. Reach:** *Expanding our audiences and supporting their access to and use of research evidence.* KTE and Communications continue to explore creative and effective ways to expand evidence dissemination and facilitate knowledge exchange using new and current technologies and techniques. The website continues as our key conduit for reaching our audiences along with the publication of our quarterly newsletter *At Work* and our monthly e-bulletin, *IWH News*. We will continue to pursue coverage in trade media and are using social media as a dissemination vehicle and to follow issues important to our stakeholders. We will continue to provide tailored workshops and briefings focused on understanding research evidence and its application.
- 3. Products:** *Developing evidence-based information products including guides, tools and lay-friendly communications that support efforts to improve the safety and health of working people.* Communications works with our scientists and stakeholders to develop a wide range of products (tools, guides, policy briefings, newsletter articles, videos) to communicate and apply research findings.

## Stakeholder Networks

**Description:** The Institute has established several formal networks representing stakeholders from a wide range of audiences concerned with occupational health and safety (OHS) and disability prevention and management. These include five health practitioner networks whose members are nominated by peers as “educationally influential” in their fields: chiropractors, ergonomists, kinesiologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists; a network of disability management professionals, and a health and safety professionals network. The purpose of these networks is to facilitate exchange of research findings and practice experience to inform IWH research and KTE activities. Network members are encouraged to disseminate relevant findings to their own networks. They receive IWH newsletters (IWH News and At Work) as well as single-topic targeted research alerts. Members are often approached to participate in research projects or for assistance with study participant recruitment. IWH also connects with employers and organized labour in informal networks.

As part of its stakeholder networks, IWH hosts a network of Ontario prevention partner organizations, the Prevention Knowledge Exchange Group (PKEG) to foster dialogue and strengthen knowledge exchange and collaboration in the prevention system. The network comprises the six Ontario health and safety associations (HSAs), five other Ontario research centres, the Prevention Division and the Fair, Safe and Healthy Workplaces Division of the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training Skills and Development (MLITSD), and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). IWH also participates in other Ontario prevention system forums such as the System Ergonomics Committee and the Workplace Vulnerability Working Group.

### **Objectives:**

- Facilitate and support knowledge exchange among IWH researchers and network members to enhance existing research and future studies at IWH
- Disseminate research findings and facilitate the uptake of research among practitioners in injury, illness and disability prevention roles
- Increase participation in IWH research projects and IWH events
- Collaborate with prevention partners to harmonize research activities and knowledge exchange opportunities for supporting the application of research evidence in Ontario workplaces

**Team and Roles:** Morgan Lay (Lead), Monique Gignac, Sara Macdonald, Peter Smith, (Co-leads) Siobhan Cardoso, Sabrina Tonima (Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Professional bodies (associations/regulatory colleges), Health & Safety Associations, MLITSD, WSIB, Ontario Prevention System Research Centres

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Occupational health and safety and other injury prevention practitioners, disability management professionals, health-care professionals, insurers, policy makers and researchers.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## IWH Hosted Events

**Description:** The Institute hosts two key events over the course of each year. The IWH Speaker Series is a monthly event featuring presentations by IWH scientists about the Institute's latest research findings. The IWH Speaker Series runs from September to June and each session attracts over 150 attendees from a diversity of professions across Ontario and beyond. Presentations are audio-recorded and made available on the IWH website and YouTube channel. The IWH also offers regular opportunities for external academics to present work and health research to IWH staff and scientists. We anticipate over the 2023/24 year that presentations will continue to be held via a live webinar platform.

The second key event hosted by the Institute is the annual Alf Nachemson Memorial Lecture, established in 2002 to honour Dr. Alf Nachemson's significant contribution to research evidence in clinical decision-making. The Nachemson lectureship is awarded annually to a prominent national or international individual who has made a significant contribution to work and health research, including the role of evidence in decision-making and evidence-based practice in the prevention of work-relevant injury, illness or disability. The lecture is delivered at a networking event to which the Institute's stakeholders are invited. The annual Nachemson lecture is a flagship event for the Institute, bringing together stakeholders and partners across the prevention system and beyond.

### **Objectives:**

- To increase the visibility of the Institute's research provincially, nationally and internationally
- To identify and acknowledge individuals who have made significant contributions to work and health research
- To provide an opportunity for networking among work and health researchers and users of their research, including workplace parties (e.g. workers, employers), policy-makers and practitioners
- To provide access to emerging and novel evidence in work-health research from the Institute

**Team and Roles:** Siobhan Cardoso, Monique Gignac, Sara Macdonald, Cindy Moser, Peter Smith, Sabrina Tonima (Project Leads), Jan Dvorak, Uyen Vu (Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Not Applicable

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** All stakeholder groups

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## Outreach and Promotion (0650)

**Description:** The Institute for Work & Health engages in ongoing activities to increase its visibility provincially, nationally and internationally, as well as to increase the potential uptake and application of its research evidence. Throughout the year, the Institute raises awareness and the profile of IWH research through participation in key events and conferences where targeted resources are made available to stakeholder groups.

**Objectives:**

- Seek new opportunities to reach out to stakeholders at non-academic conferences and events (e.g., professional association events)
- Present key research initiatives at non-academic, stakeholder events where appropriate
- Work with intermediary organizations, e.g. professional groups and associations to reach their members/clients
- Assist IWH researchers in linking with workplace parties and other stakeholders
- Enhance knowledge exchange with leaders from employer and labour communities
- Profile the Institute as a credible and reliable resource of evidence-based information and tools for improving the health of workers

**Team and Roles:** Sara Macdonald (Project Lead), Siobhan Cardoso, Monique Gignac, Cindy Moser, Peter Smith, Sabrina Tonima, Uyen Vu (Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** Professional groups, employer associations, unions, health and safety associations

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** All stakeholder groups, with particular attention to workplace parties and stakeholders concerned with health, safety and return to work.

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

Products: Newsletters, Plain-Language Summaries and Other Information Resources (0604, 0611, 0629, 0636, 0660, 0663, 0665, 0690)

**Description:** The Institute for Work & Health's Communications Department produces a wide range of products that are designed to share IWH research findings, events and resources with stakeholders. These products include newsletters, plain-language summaries, infographics, videos, annual/corporate reports and articles written for stakeholder publications and other resources. Communications and KTE together also develop tools and guides, policy briefs, case studies and other resources, as appropriate. All products and resources are written in plain language, with messages tailored to targeted audiences.

The main product for sharing plain-language IWH findings with our stakeholders is the quarterly newsletter, *At Work*, which is available online in html and pdf formats (and, occasionally, in print for distribution at outreach events).

**Objectives:**

- Develop lay-friendly, easy-to-access informational resources targeted to and valued by external stakeholders
- Keep external stakeholders aware of the research and events coming out of the Institute
- Ensure IWH information is of high quality, and is relevant to and easily understood by stakeholders
- Encourage and support uptake and use of IWH research findings and resources
- Increase the Institute's visibility as a credible, reliable and impartial source of research evidence
- Facilitate recruitment of participants into research projects, as appropriate

**Team and Roles:** Cindy Moser (Project Lead), Uyen Vu (Co-lead), Jan Dvorak, Sara Macdonald, Sabrina Tonima (Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** IWH scientists, researchers, and other staff

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Policy-makers (in the fields of occupational health and safety, disability management, workers' compensation, accessibility and inclusion, and public health); workplace parties (employers, labour representatives and workers); OHS/disability professionals; health practitioners; other researchers in the field of work and health; and the intermediary organizations representing and serving these external stakeholders (e.g., health and safety associations, professional associations)

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

Reach and Dissemination: Website, Outreach, Media, Social Media, e-Alerts and Subscriber Acquisition (0630, 0650, 0655, 0660, 0682, 0690)

**Description:** The Institute for Work & Health's research findings, news, events and resources only become useful, valued and effective when they reach their intended audiences. The Institute's Communications Department, working closely with the KTE Department and Director, Strategic Relations, ensures the Institute reaches a growing number of people within its stakeholder audiences through various dissemination activities, including websites, e-alerts, social media channels, media relations activities and stakeholder conferences. Through these channels and other subscriber-growth activities, the Institute also seeks to extend its reach to ensure more and more stakeholders are receiving and taking up IWH research.

The main vehicle for housing the Institute's information is the IWH website: [www.iwh.on.ca](http://www.iwh.on.ca). The main vehicle for maintaining regular contact with our stakeholders is our monthly e-newsletter, *IWH News*. The Institute also disseminates information through its social media accounts (Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube), targeted e-alerts and various KTE activities (see Stakeholder Networks and Outreach and Promotion).

**Objectives:**

- Keep external stakeholders aware of the research, news and events coming out of the Institute
- Encourage, support and increase uptake and use of IWH research findings and resources
- Build awareness of the Institute for Work & Health brand as a reliable source of information
- Promote events, including the IWH Speaker Series
- Extend the reach/audience for IWH research
- Support the building and maintenance of strong and active stakeholder relationships
- Monitor and manage reach, dissemination and impact metrics
- Keep website contents, features, design and security up to date

**Team and Roles:** Cindy Moser (Project Lead), Uyen Vu (Co-lead), Jan Dvorak, Siobhan Cardoso, Morgan Lay, Lyudmila Mansurova, Sara Macdonald, Sabrina Tonima (Team)

**Collaboration and Partners:** IWH scientists, researchers and other staff

**Knowledge Transfer Strategies:** This project uses an integrated KTE approach. Research findings will be tailored for lay audiences and disseminated through established IWH communication vehicles.

**Target Audience:** Policy-makers (in the fields of occupational health and safety, disability management, workers' compensation, accessibility and inclusion, and public health); workplace parties (employers, labour representatives and workers); OHS/disability professionals; health practitioners; other researchers in the field of work and health; and the intermediary organizations representing and serving these external stakeholders (e.g., health and safety associations, professional associations)

**Linkage to *Prevention Works*:** Not applicable

**Funded by:** MLITSD

**Project findings available in Open Access journals, platforms, or repositories (If not, please indicate if a preprint will be posted publicly):** None to date

**Related research summaries:** none to date

**Related interviews and articles:** none to date

**IWH Speaker Series presentations:** none to date

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

Corporate Services plays a crucial role in providing facilities, human resources management, finance and accounting capacity and oversees the purchase and maintenance of equipment and supplies. The administrative infrastructure and human resource function supports the diversity and complexity of Institute work. It also provides liaison and support to the Institute's Board of Directors.

In 2023/24, Corporate Services will continue work on updating our human resources policies. Corporate Services will also ensure compliance with the Ontario government's directive concerning travel, meal and hospitality expenses.

Work continues to ensure that staff are aware of new and revised policies as a result of the work done by the Policy Review Committee, including an annual review of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

The Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee will work with members of the Executive Committee to ensure IWH continues to be a safe and healthy place to work.