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Journal articles marked with an asterisk indicate an IWH scientist or adjunct scientist is included in the list of authors.

***Engel L, Adedotun K, Ewesesan R, and Arowolo I. Promoting financial empowerment after brain injury: findings from focus groups. *Clinical Rehabilitation*. 2025; [epub ahead of print].**

<https://doi.org/10.1177/02692155251382507> [open access]

Abstract: Objective To cocreate and synthesize financial empowerment ideas for people living with acquired brain injury from multiple perspectives. Design We completed a qualitative descriptive study using focus-group methods. Content analysis was guided by deductive categorization across overlapping idea areas of educational products, human-interaction services, and advocacy approaches, followed by inductive idea subcategorization. Setting We held seven focus groups, five online and two in-person. Participants were recruited via community organization advertisements and convenience sampling. Four researchers analyzed transcripts using a triangulation approach. Participants Twenty-five adults (ages 18+) participated in seven different focus groups: 15 individuals living with acquired brain injury (five groups); 2 close others (one group); and 8 project advisory members (one group). Demographics varied across age, education, and time since injury; most were women. Results We generated 20 idea subcategories for financial empowerment after brain injury. Participants discussed ideas related to advocacy and service ideas more than products, but noted the salience of varied option availability to meet different needs across individuals. Participants living with brain injury identified seven unique ideas compared to the close other group and project advisory group. Conclusions Financial empowerment to address economic factors of financial capability and financial well-being after brain injury is important to brain injury rehabilitation, health, and well-being. Including lived experience voices provided unique ideas for addressing financial empowerment. Providing a spectrum of options and addressing contextualization factors could enhance the financial

well-being of adults living with brain injury, which can contribute to brain injury recovery and improve community participation

Adesoji T, Pearce A, Kleiner B, and McGinnis S. Assessing the impact of green building features on the occupational safety and health of construction workers. *Journal of Safety Research*. 2025; 94:59-69.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2025.06.008>

Abstract: INTRODUCTION: The construction industry is known to be among the most dangerous, given the rate of incidents and hazards to workers. However, with the shift from conventional to sustainable construction, green building features introduce new concerns for on-site hazards that put workers at higher risk. METHOD: This study conducted a review of existing literature to identify green building features associated with hazards or otherwise having health and safety implications for the construction industry. In addition to the literature review, this study also employed a review of construction fatality reports from the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the U.S. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). This analysis focused on identifying instances where features associated with green building in the literature were implied to have caused incidents as reported in the fatality reports, using content analysis as the primary methodological approach. This meticulous method allowed for systematic examination of data, revealing patterns and connections between specific green building features and occupational safety. RESULTS: The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of safety considerations within green building projects. The study identifies hazards that may pose risk in these projects by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and empirical evidence. It highlights safety protocols for construction stakeholders to prioritize while implementing on-site green building features. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS: This understanding can inform construction practices and safety guidelines to foster safer working environments in the context of sustainable construction within the construction industry

Arefian S, Laybidi MI, Vahedi M, Melloh M, and Mokhtarinia HR. Impact of mental and physical workload on work function in office workers with musculoskeletal disorders. *BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders*. 2025; 26(1):867.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12891-025-09147-0> [open access]

Abstract: Background: Occupational risk factors, including personal, physical, and psychosocial elements, cumulatively impact impairments and job performance, especially in the presence of pain. This study investigates how demographic characteristics, as well as mental and physical workloads, influence the work function of office workers with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Methods: In this cross-sectional study conducted in Iran, 260 office workers (72% female, mean age 42.6 ± 6.7) participated. Among them, 225 individuals with MSDs in at least two body regions were included in the second phase. Demographic information was self-reported. The prevalence of MSDs, work function, mental and physical workloads were assessed using the Extended Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire (NMQ-E), Work Role Functioning Questionnaire (WRFQ-2), NASA Task Load Index (TLX) questionnaire, and Rapid Office Strain Assessment (ROSA), respectively. Linear and multiple regression analyses were performed to identify significant risk factors. Results: Of the participants, 86.53% reported experiencing pain in at least two body regions during the last year and were included in the second phase. The lower back (57.3%) and neck (50.7%) were the most affected regions during

the last year. Regression analysis revealed significant associations between work function and mental workload, physical workload, as well as specific subscales of NASA-TLX (physical and frustration subscales) and ROSA (Chair score, Monitor, and Telephone scores). Conclusion: Both mental and physical workloads were significant independent predictors of poorer work function in office workers with MSDs. These findings underscore the need to address both domains concurrently in ergonomics and occupational health programs.

Brooks SK, Patel D, and Greenberg N. Occupational well-being of diplomatic personnel: a qualitative study. Occupational Medicine. 2025; 75(6):313-318.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqae096> [open access]

Abstract: BACKGROUND: Diplomatic personnel face unique job demands due to their frequent relocations. There is some evidence that occupational stress contributes to poor well-being in this occupational group, but little research on the aspects of the job that are perceived to be particularly challenging. AIMS: This study aimed to explore diplomatic personnel's perceptions of their organization and their roles and to identify aspects of the job, which could cause stress and potentially affect well-being. METHODS: Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 24 employees of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office between September 2021 and February 2022. Participants were asked to reflect on their experiences before the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. RESULTS: Participants enjoyed many aspects of their work including the variety, travel opportunities and feeling that they made a difference. They also identified several stressors relating to job demands, overseas postings, family needs, frequent relocation, hardship posts, workplace relationships, (lack of) appreciation and acknowledgement, and organizational culture. Good relationships with colleagues and managers were perceived to be very important. CONCLUSIONS: Findings suggest various ways in which diplomatic organizations can better support their personnel, highlighting workload management; cross-cultural training; providing appropriate support to both accompanying families and unaccompanied staff members; practical and psychological preparation for those in high-risk locations; encouraging positive workplace relationships; good management; increased autonomy and increased recognition for good work

Christianson-Barker J, Franzius A, Mills R, Lomness A, and Hole R. Employing strength: a scoping review of customized employment practices to support inclusive employment for people with intellectual disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 2025; 63(2):119-140.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10522263251356445> [open access]

Abstract: Background Inclusive employment offers advantages for both employers and individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, high unemployment rates persist for people with intellectual disabilities, underscoring the need for alternative approaches. Customized employment (CE) has emerged as a promising strategy by tailoring job opportunities to align with individual strengths and employer requirements. Objective This review answers the question, "What does the literature say about the use of customized employment practices to facilitate paid employment for people with intellectual disabilities?" Methods We conducted a scoping review of the literature. Eight databases were searched, including APA PsycInfo, Medline, CINAHL, Scopus, Web of Science, Business Source Ultimate, Social Services Abstracts and Social Science Abstracts. Results Fifty-seven articles were deemed relevant to the research question, revealing clear trends and key characteristics of CE. The

literature suggests that CE can lead to improved employment outcomes, greater self-determination and independence, and increased employer satisfaction. However, lack of evaluative measures has led to inconsistencies in delivery and quality of support. CE practices may demand more time and higher costs compared to other types of supported employment. Conclusions When implemented effectively, CE practices can be a valuable method for supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities in securing inclusive employment.

Ferguson K, Corrente M, and Bourgeault IL. Facilitators and barriers to mental health leaves and return to work among Canadian teachers. *New Solutions*. 2025; 35(3):316-325.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10482911251362471> [open access]

Abstract: In our qualitative study, we interviewed 45 Canadian teachers about mental health issues, taking a leave of absence, and their subsequent return to work. We found that doctors, supportive principals, supportive colleagues, supportive human resource departments, supportive school boards, and the teaching unions were facilitators for taking a leave, while stigma, unsupportive administration, preparation, and the process of taking a leave were barriers. In returning to work, principals and administrators, and preparation to return were cited as barriers, while colleagues, principals and administrators, doctors, unions and a change in work were facilitators. We interpret these findings through a synthesized framework combining Allegro and Veerman's theory of sickness absence and D'Amato and Zijlstra's theory of work resumption, highlighting individual, organizational, and societal factors shaping leave and return decisions. With the high cost of teacher absences and critical staffing shortages, we discuss the impacts of these facilitators and barriers and make recommendations for practice for a healthy teaching workforce

Gunawan YA, Suen MW, Denny HM, and Restya WP. Alleviating work stress with physical activity: a comprehensive review. *Work*. 2025; 82(1):35-45.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10519815251337040>

Abstract: Background: Work stress presents significant challenges to employee well-being and productivity. Physical activity interventions in the workplace have been associated with occupational stress reduction; however, further investigation with meticulous planning and comprehensive descriptions of the interventions is necessary. Objective: This study aimed to synthesize the effects of physical activity interventions on work stress among employees based on studies published from 2019 to 2024. Methods: This comprehensive review examines the effects of physical activity interventions on work stress outcomes, synthesizing studies published between 2019 and 2024. The study followed the PRISMA guidelines and was registered in PROSPERO (CRD42024611620). Quality assessment was performed using Cochrane's Risk of Bias tools, and meta-analysis was conducted using Comprehensive Meta-Analysis software. Results: The review analyzed interventions such as aerobic training, resistance training, holistic movement practices, and sports activities. This study revealed a small negative correlation between physical activity and stress ($d = -0.24$, 95% CI [-0.83, 0.35]). Substantial heterogeneity ($I^2 = 98\%$, $p < 0.001$) indicated variation across populations and intervention types. Conclusions: Despite modest effects, results highlight the potential of tailored, sustainable physical activity programs to improve employee resilience and workplace well-being. This study emphasizes incorporating physical activity into wellness strategies and encourages future research to optimize intervention design and implementation for maximum impact.

Hara K, Nagata T, Matoba M, and Miyazaki T. The impact of productivity loss from presenteeism and absenteeism on mental health in Japan. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*. 2025; 67(9):699-704.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000003431> [open access]

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Mental health issues among employees cause significant productivity losses through presenteeism and absenteeism. This study aimed to quantify productivity losses caused by employees with mental health issues in Japan. METHODS: Participants were recruited to match the Japanese population distribution by gender, age, and region. Mental health status and productivity loss were assessed using self-administered questionnaires. The results were extrapolated to estimate nationwide impact calculated using probabilistic sensitivity analysis. RESULTS: We analyzed 27,507 individuals. Productivity loss due to mental health-related presenteeism was estimated at \$46.73 billion, and absenteeism at \$1.85 billion, equivalent to 1.1% of Japan's GDP and over seven times the medical costs for mental disorders. Women in their 20s reported more mental health issues than men. CONCLUSIONS: These results highlight the urgent need for businesses and governments to enhance workplace mental health measures

Jin M, Swainson M, Wang C, and Morris A. Systematic review: occupational sedentary behaviour and common mental health symptoms. *Occupational Medicine*. 2025; 75(6):275-281.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqaf072> [open access]

Abstract: BACKGROUND: Adults accumulate high volumes of daily sedentary behaviour at work, which over time has been associated with negative effects on mental health. Poor mental health, in turn, is associated with increased errors, absenteeism rates, and reduced productivity. Despite this, few studies have examined how occupational sedentary behaviour relates to symptoms of common mental health symptoms. AIMS: To explore the associations between occupational sedentary behaviour and common mental health symptoms. METHODS: A systematic search was conducted following the PRISMA guidelines from CINAHL, Medline, PsycInfo, SPORTDiscus and Web of Science. The JBI checklist was used to assess methodological quality. The best-evidence synthesis was employed to explore associations between occupational sedentary behaviour and mental health symptoms. Synthesis categorized the measurement of mental health symptoms across the selected studies into four groups, including depression, anxiety, combined symptoms of depression and anxiety, and stress. RESULTS: Five cross-sectional studies from Australia, Sweden, the UK, and the US were included. Overall, mixed results were found, including both positive and no associations between occupational sedentary behaviour and combined common mental health symptoms. The limited evidence currently indicates that there are no independent associations between occupational sedentary behaviour and depression, anxiety and stress. CONCLUSIONS: Current evidence is insufficient to establish a definitive association between occupational sedentary behaviour and common mental health symptoms. However, this review identified important gaps that call for further investigation, specifically into the occupational domain of sedentary behaviour, understanding sedentary behaviour patterns across different occupations and considering job characteristics when exploring its relationship with mental health

Masterson EA, Morata TC, and Themann CL. Prevalence of ototoxic chemical exposure, noise exposure and hearing difficulty among workers in the United States, 2023. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*. 2025; 67(10):785-797.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000003445> [open access]

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: This study estimated the prevalence of hearing difficulty and workplace exposures to ototoxic chemicals and noise within US industries and occupations. METHODS: This cross-sectional study examined 2023 National Health Interview Survey data for 17,726 workers. Weighted prevalence and adjusted prevalence ratios of self-reported hearing difficulty and self-reported workplace exposures to ototoxic chemicals, noise and a combination of these exposures were estimated. RESULTS: Eleven percent of workers reported hearing difficulty. Within the past year, 13% were exposed to ototoxic chemicals, 16% were exposed to noise, and 7% were exposed to both. Twenty-eight percent had a history of noise exposure. CONCLUSIONS: Workplace hearing hazards are common. This study was the first to report the overall prevalence of ototoxic chemical exposure among US workers. This exposure cannot be overlooked when protecting worker hearing

Pacheco M, Fitzsimmons K, Reeb-Whitaker C, Rosenman K, Flattery J, Weinberg JL, et al. Work-related asthma in the cannabis industry: findings from California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Washington. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*. 2025; 67(10):862-868.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000003461>

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Describe work-related asthma (WRA) cases and associated exposures in the legalized cannabis industry. METHODS: Using data from four state-based surveillance systems (California, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Washington), WRA cases within the cannabis industry were identified and classified as new-onset asthma or work-aggravated asthma. RESULTS: From legalization dates (1996 in California, 2012 in Massachusetts, 2008 in Michigan, 1998 in Washington) through 2023, 30 WRA cases were identified. A majority were aged 18 to 34 years (66.7%) and were male (60%). Thirteen (52%) cases were new-onset asthma, and 12 (48%) were work-aggravated asthma, with two fatalities. The most frequently reported exposure was plant materials (40.4%), of which 94.7% were cannabis dust and/or marijuana plant. Most cases (69%) worked in indoor cultivation/processing. CONCLUSIONS: Cannabis industry workers are at risk for WRA, emphasizing the need for interventions to address workplace respiratory hazards

Rabbani M, Merrifield A, Granger S, and Turner N. When work stays in the family: parent-child employment configurations, safety communication, and young workers' injury risk. *Journal of Safety Research*. 2025; 94:383-390.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2025.06.033> [open access]

Abstract: Introduction: This study examines how specific parent-child employment configurations shape family safety communication and injury risk among young workers in family-owned businesses. Method: Drawing on cross-domain multiplex theory (Methot et al., 2024), we analyze survey data from 2,275 young workers (M age = 16.45; 49.9% female) in Ontario, Canada, distinguishing among four relational work arrangements: working for parents, working with parents, working both for and with parents, and working neither for nor with parents. Results: Although thicker multiplex ties were expected to strengthen safety communication and reduce injury risk, working for parents was associated with less frequent family safety communication, and safety communication did not mediate the relationship between work configuration and lost-time injury. However, young workers

who worked for or both for and with their parents were significantly more likely to report work-related injuries than those working outside of family relationships. Practical applications: These findings challenge assumptions about the protective nature of family business employment, illustrate how relational structures can both enable and constrain safety communication, and highlight the need for targeted safety supports for higher-risk parent-child work arrangements.

Soupene VA, Davis J, Platt JM, Romitti PA, Cavanaugh JE, and Casteel C. Suicide rates by lethal means and occupational group among US workers, 2013-2019. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*. 2025; 67(10):834-842.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000003450>

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: The aim of the study was to calculate rates of suicide by lethal means and occupational group during 2013-2019 for US workers. METHODS: This descriptive study included suicide rates for workers 24-65 years of age which were calculated using decedents from the National Violent Death Reporting System and population estimates from the American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample. Rates were stratified by lethal means, occupation, and biological sex. RESULTS: Firearm-related suicides rates were highest among construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and protective service occupations. Poisoning-related suicide rates were highest among arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; construction and extraction; and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations. CONCLUSIONS: Occupational groups with access to firearms at work and low-wage jobs have higher rates of firearm-related suicide. Future investigations should examine how occupational access to firearms contributes to suicide risk among workers

Stahl C, Lundqvist D, and Reineholm C. Improving work environments through regulation: a literature review on the influence of regulation, inspection practices and organizational conditions in European workplaces. *Safety Science*. 2025; 191:106917.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2025.106917> [open access]

Abstract: This article reviews existing European research on how work environment legislation is received and put into practice in workplace contexts, focusing on what organizational conditions that influence workplaces' compliance with occupational health and safety regulations. The article is based on a rapid review, with studies that 1) focus on European work contexts; 2) study legislation, regulations, or inspection practices in a workplace setting; or 3) study how organizations and workplaces receive and apply regulations in their OHS practices and/or conditions for such practices in relation to regulations. Included studies were published between 2013 and March 2024. The search generated 16 284 references of which 339 full texts were screened; finally, 56 studies were included. A thematic analysis identified four themes: 1) from legislation to practice; 2) contextual conditions; 3) structural conditions; and 4) social conditions. Based on the review, it is concluded that legislation functions as an external pressure on employers to develop routines to establish a good work environment. This is dependent on regulations' clarity and relevance, and inspection practices that are constructive in character. If an internal system is established to promote OHS practices, this creates a corresponding internal pressure within the organization to prioritize work environment issues. Such a system is facilitated by adequate OHS management, systems for risk assessment, integrated routines, sufficient awareness and training, and sufficient general work conditions.

Topazian RJ, Wec A, Ali J, Frattaroli S, Locke P, Taylor JA, et al. The value of occupational health and safety data: perceptions of current data practices in the fire service. *Journal of Safety Research*. 2025; 94:120-127.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2025.06.016>

Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Despite growing interest in utilizing firefighter health and safety data to reduce injuries and fatalities, there is little evidence on attitudes towards data. We examined fire service perceptions of data to inform future policies and practices. METHODS: We conducted focus groups and interviews with career firefighters, union representatives, and department leaders in Maryland and Virginia; and interviews with national leaders (March-November 2023). RESULTS: We conducted 35 interviews and 4 focus groups (65 participants). Departments collected health, injury, and exposure information to establish fitness for duty, facilitate benefits, conduct prevention, and advance administrative priorities. Leaders described cultural and resource limitations. Participants desired more mental health and exposure data, and improved data infrastructure. CONCLUSIONS: Participants viewed data as valuable for health and safety but identified needs surrounding future data collection, resource investments, and cultural shifts

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