

An Introduction to OHCOW

CUPE ONTARIO
Injured Workers Advocacy
Committee Conference

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Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers



OHCOW



OHCOW was established in 1989 to act as a resource to workers and employers to:

- provide objective, scientific information and
- focus on prevention of occupational health problems in the workplace.



OHCOW

- **An inter-disciplinary occupational health team:**
 - **Occupational Physicians**
 - **Occupational Health Nurses**
 - **Ergonomists**
 - **Occupational Hygienists**
 - **Administrative Assistants**
- **Funded by WSIB Prevention Services**



Clinic Services:

1. **Individual Client** (clinical)
2. **Answer Questions** (work/health related)
3. **Informational Presentations**
4. **Workplace Visits**
 - requested by co-chairs of JH&SC
5. **Exposure Investigations/Research**
 - medical/hygiene/ergonomic combined



VISION STATEMENT

The detection, prevention and elimination of occupational injuries and illnesses.

The promotion of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being for all workers.



Mission statement

To protect workers and their communities from occupational injuries and illnesses, and to promote their social, mental and physical well-being through:

1. Clinical services

- Providing multi-disciplinary services to workers who are concerned about their occupational health and to the families of workers who fall victim to occupational disease



Mission statement

To protect workers and their communities from occupational injuries and illnesses, and to promote their social, mental and physical well-being through:

2. Prevention services

- Identifying and analyzing occupational hazards and exposures, and developing effective programs for prevention and elimination.
- Participating in prevention initiatives which address environmental or public health as well as occupational health.



Mission statement

To protect workers and their communities from occupational injuries and illnesses, and to promote their social, mental and physical well-being through:

3. Research, knowledge transfer, tool development and educational services

- Conducting and supporting participatory research and promoting its contribution to knowledge transfers and development of prevention tools and resources.
- Educating and learning from workers, workplaces and the community about occupational hazards, exposures and prevention solutions



Mission statement

To protect workers and their communities from occupational injuries and illnesses, and to promote their social, mental and physical well-being through:

4. Partnerships

- Building and maintaining strong relationships with workers and unions and, wherever possible, with employers through joint health and safety committees, trades committees and health and safety representatives.
- Building and maintaining strong partnerships within the Ontario prevention system, to further our vision and mission.



Mission statement

To protect workers and their communities from occupational injuries and illnesses, and to promote their social, mental and physical well-being through:

5. Commitment to service excellence and to the wellbeing of our staff

- Dedicating ourselves to the highest degree of service and respect to those we serve, and to being an exemplary healthy, safe, supportive and respectful workplace, focusing our resources on the most important priorities and operating in a cost efficient, accountable and effective way.



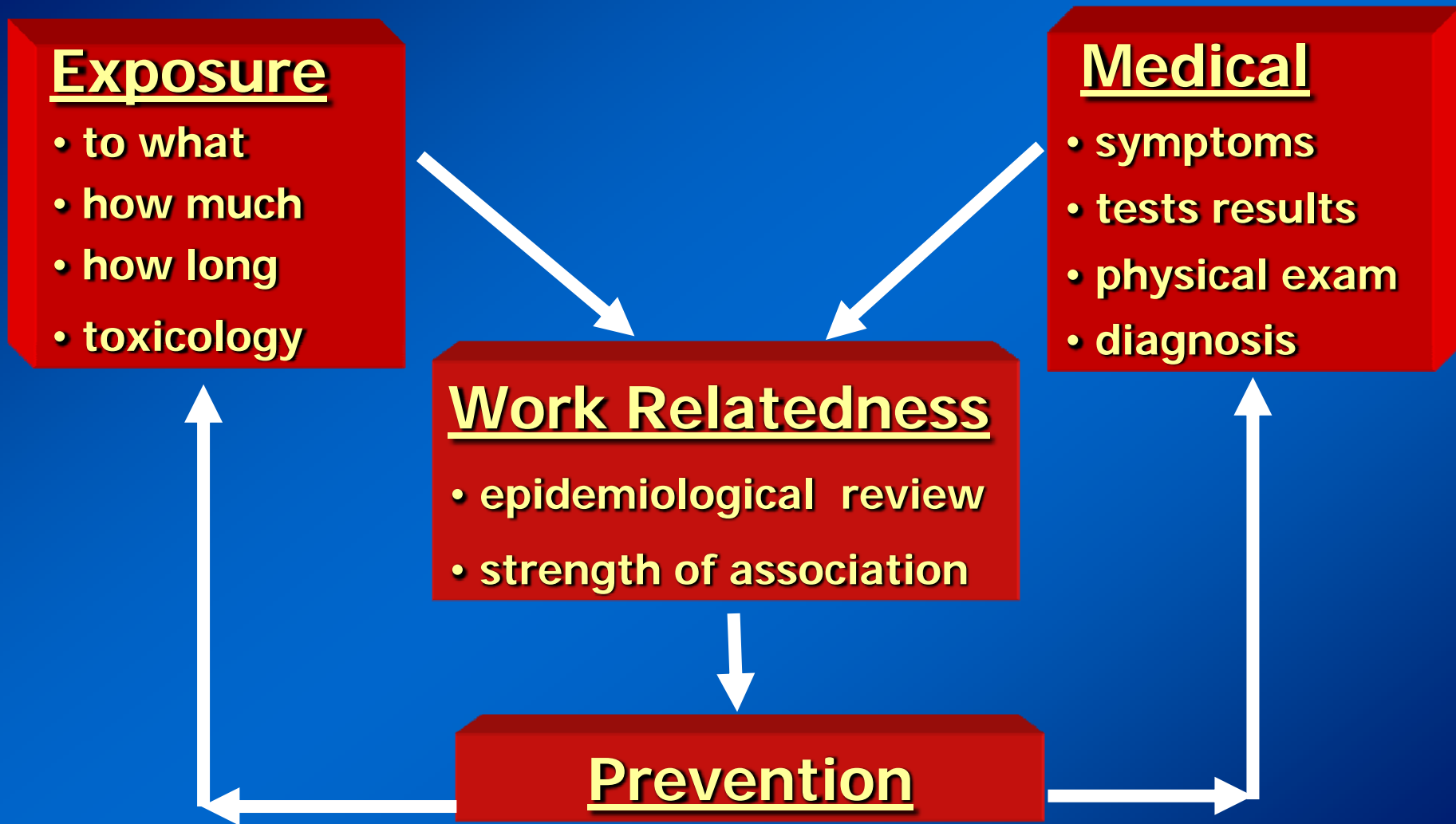


We are....



**Occupational Health
Clinics for Ontario
Workers Inc.**

What OHCOW Does:



Individual Client Consultation



- Purpose:
 - To determine work-relatedness of health concern
- Outcome:
 - Reporting association to relevant individual or agency. E.g. family doctor, WSIB, worker representative, worker, workplace
 - Education or recommendations e.g. review MSDS, PPE
 - Offer to come into workplace to work with the JHSC
- Workers can self refer to the clinic.
 - Also get referrals from MDs, H&S
- What OHCOW does not do:
 - No treatment provided
 - Does not address level of disability nor RTW (return to work)



Workplace Consultations



- Purpose:
 - To assist the JHSC to:
 - To identify the prevalence and extent of health effects of workplace exposures
 - Identify hazards and ways to reduce or eliminate these
- Outcome:
 - Consultation by multi-disciplinary team depending on need
 - Intervention determined with JHSC e.g.
 - Informal On site consultation
 - Questionnaire + exposure assessment findings
 - Recommendations for improvements
- Have to be invited in by co-chairs of JHSC
- What OHCOW does not do:
 - Complete workplace H&S audits or assessments



Outreach: Migrant Worker Experience



- connected with migrant worker centres for a number of years
- met with local medical doctors who see migrant workers (provided pesticide poisoning information)
- in partnership with stakeholders and local Public Health Unit we held evening “walk-in clinics” for migrant workers last summer – planning on more this summer.
- helped legal people with medical issues



Occupational Hygiene in the Clinic Context:

- the occupational hygienist becomes more attuned to the **health implications of exposures** (less concerned with compliance)
- **biological exposure monitoring** is an area where medicine and hygiene overlap
- bringing **worker symptom experience** into exposure investigations
- naturally leads to the incorporation of **epidemiological techniques** into exposure assessments



Heat stress enquiry:

- Union Health and Safety Rep calls about the possibility of using Humidex for heat stress evaluation
- Hygienist works out scheme to translate moderate unacclimatized WBGT standards into Humidex
- Simplification is appealing to other workplaces as well



Humidex Response Plan:

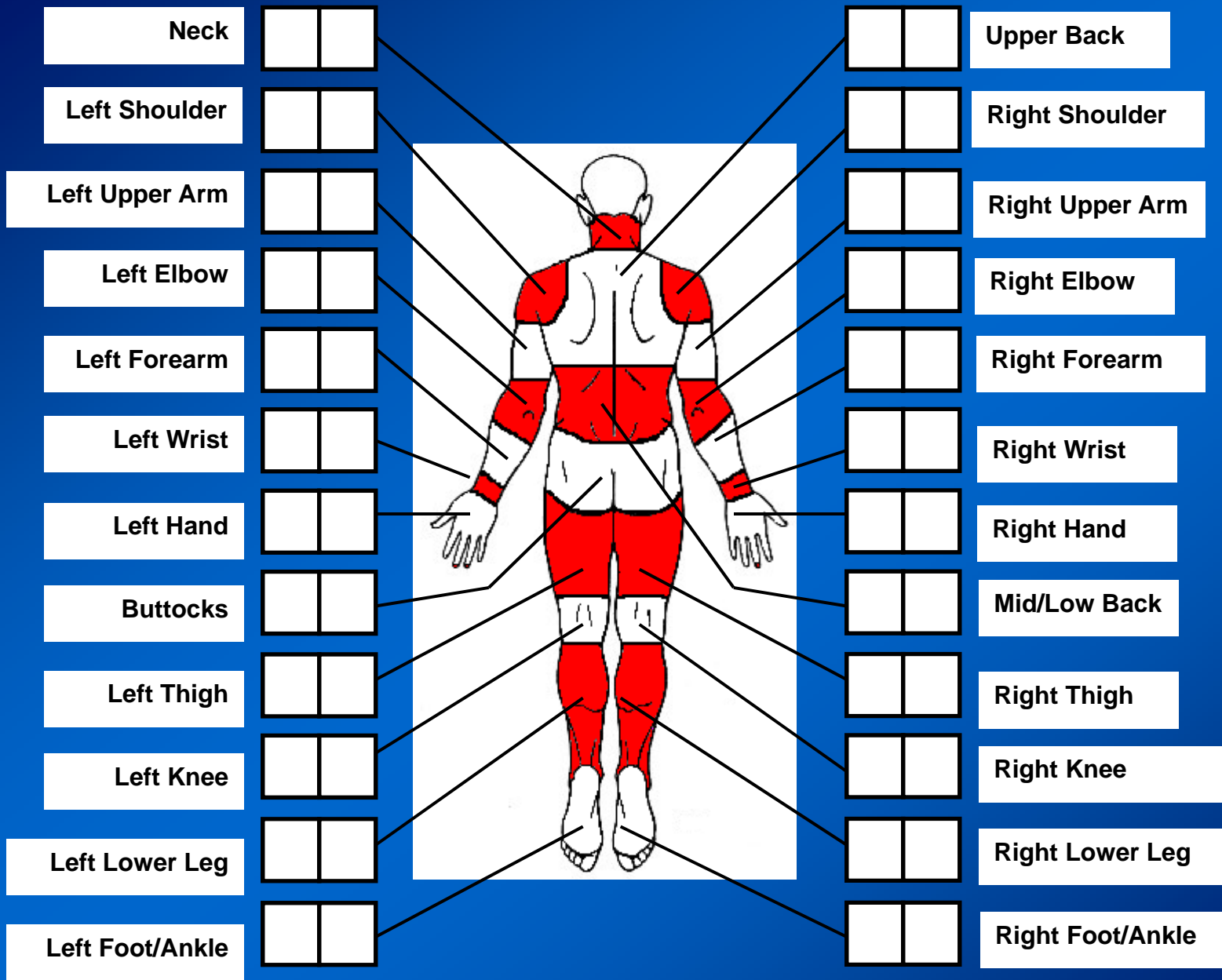
Humidex	Action
30-33	alert & information & water
34-37	warning, education & double water
38-39	restrict activity 25% & actively monitor for signs of heat strain
40-41	restrict activity 50% & actively monitor for signs of heat strain
42-44	restrict activity 75% & actively monitor for signs of heat strain
45+	stop work



Ergonomic Services

- Review relationship between work exposures and MSDs for individual patients
- Wide range of educational presentations and workshops to workplaces, classes, conferences, etc.
- Workplace consultations with the JHSC can be:
 - Detailed assessment with report with recommendations
 - Exposure questionnaires including discomfort survey
 - Roundtable meetings to discuss ergonomic improvement action plan or program development
 - **Always insist on worker involvement**





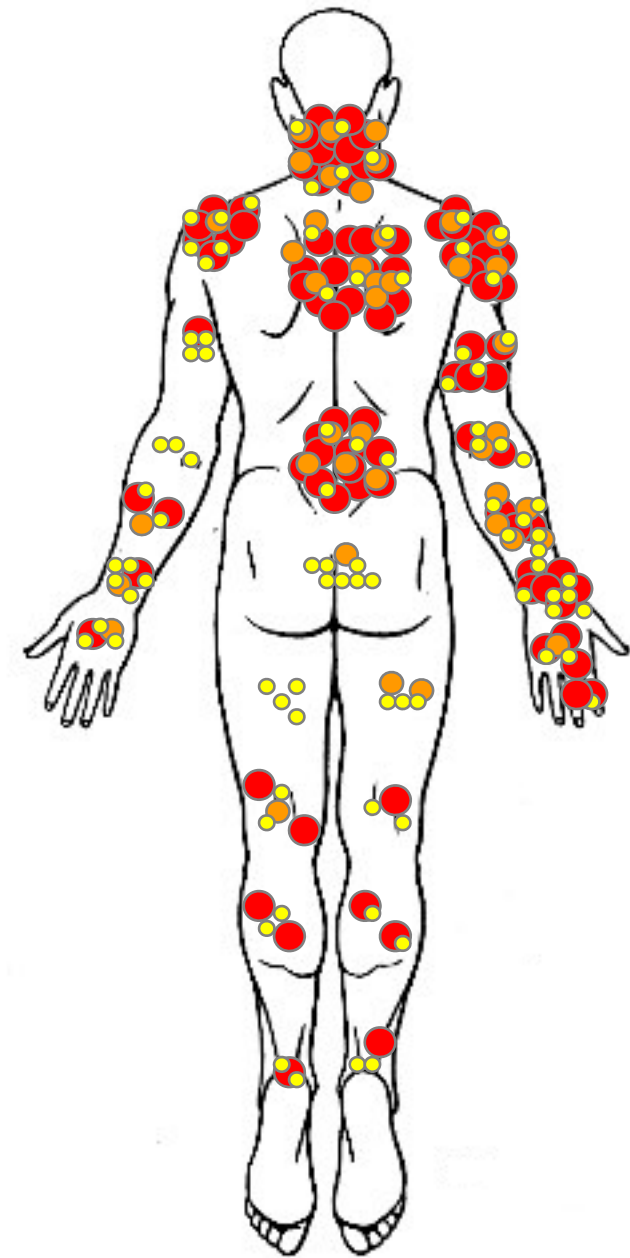
legend

1	not likely to seek treatment
2	somewhat likely to seek treatment
3	very likely to seek treatment

freq Discmfrt	B/1 = rarely	C/2 =frequently	D/3 =constantly
1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1
3	1	2	2
4	1	2	2
5	1	2	3
6	2	3	3
7	2	3	3
8	2	3	3
9	3	3	3
10	3	3	3

Department X (n=36)

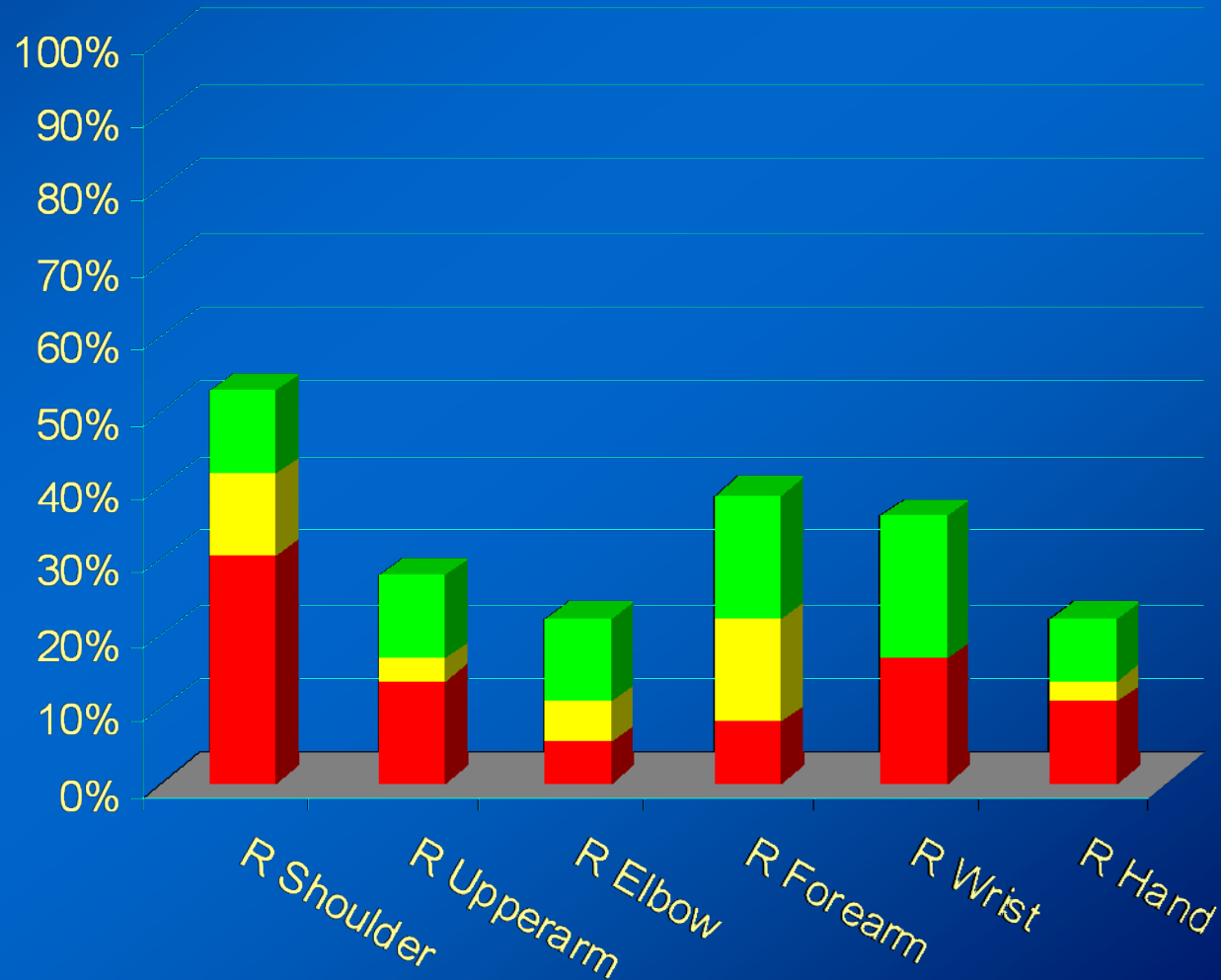
1	not likely to seek treatment	•
2	somewhat likely to seek treatment	•
3	very likely to seek treatment	•



Department X Right Side

legend

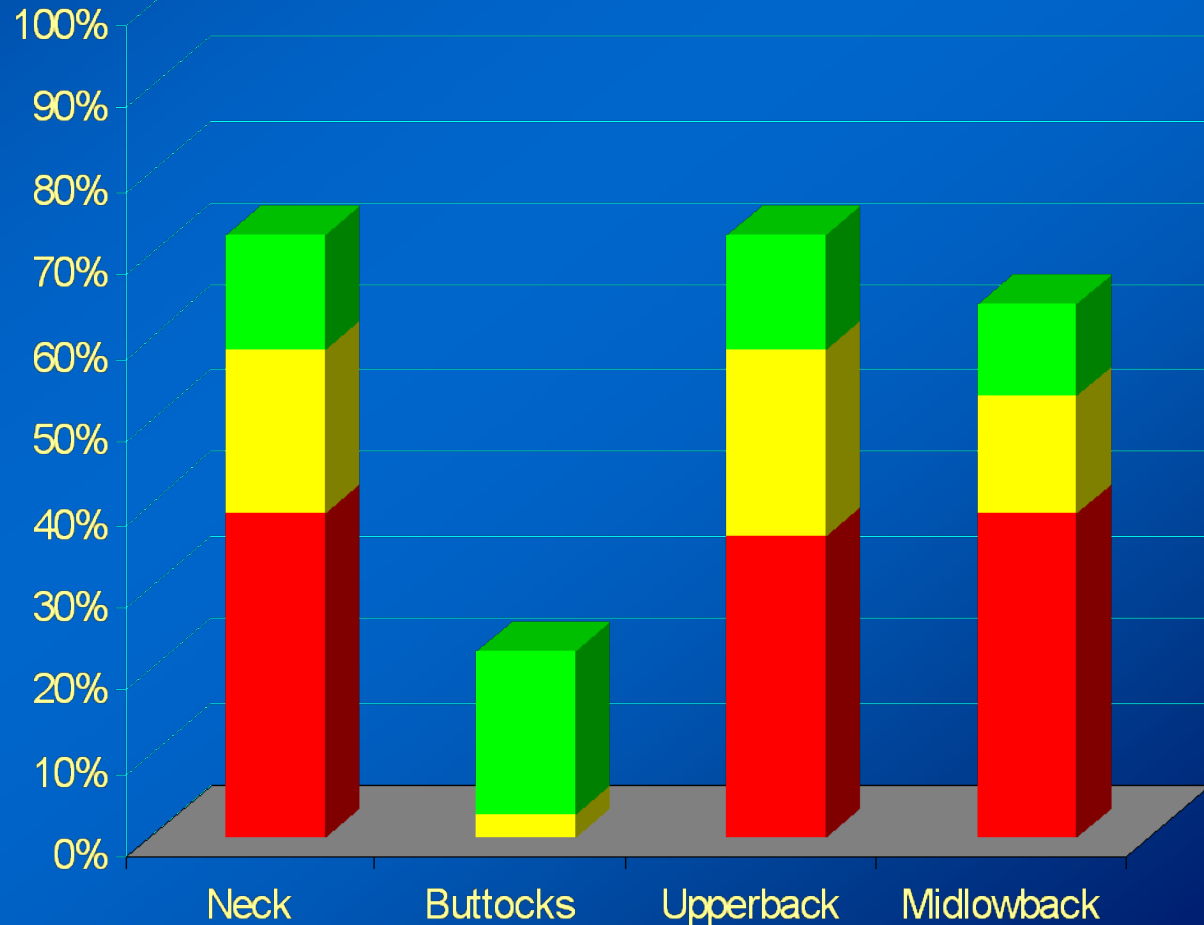
1	not likely to seek treatment
2	somewhat likely to seek treatment
3	very likely to seek treatment



Department X Neck and Back

legend

1	not likely to seek treatment
2	somewhat likely to seek treatment
3	very likely to seek treatment



Warehouse Distribution Centre

- Invited by the JHSC to assist with injuries and discomfort of shipping workers
- Video taped workers performing daily tasks and talked with them about their concerns
- Returned to workplace, presenting basic MSD information and hazards identified at the facility
- Facilitated a roundtable problem solving session with workers, site manager and company president



Guns



Wearable Scanners





Group Work Case Study



Ergonomic Group Case Study

- A large unionized residential long-term care facility
- High number of back shoulder claims
- NEER surcharge & Workwell audit
- Called us for assistance



Ergonomic Group Case Study

- An Ergonomist and Occupational Health Nurse visited the worksite:
 - Met with the co-chairs
 - Toured the workplace
 - Spoke with several workers
 - Met with the committee
- Our focus was narrowed to the medication carts in the facility*



Ergonomic Group Case Study

What we did:

- Came back and observed the cart use
 - Medication rounds
- Examined the organization and features of the carts
- Took measurements of force requirements, dimensions, distances traveled...
- Administered a questionnaire (77% RR)
 - job title, duties, personal info, cart characteristics, stress, discomfort





Work Health Questionnaire

The following questions are being asked to assist in making recommendations regarding the use of the medication carts at Macassar. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and you personally will not be identified in any report. Please put the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided and put it in the questionnaire box or mail it in confidence to the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers.

- What is your current Job Title: _____
- What is the average number of hours you work each week:
 - < 15 hours
 - 15 to 30 hours
 - > 30 hours
- Height:
 - < 5'
 - 5' - 5'3"
 - > 5'3"
- Gender:
 - Female
 - Male
- Age:
 - 16 - 24 yrs
 - 25 - 39 yrs
 - 40 - 55 yrs
 - 55 + yrs
- Number of years worked at Macassar: _____ yrs
- Number of years worked in long term care: _____ yrs
- What percentage of your time is spent administering medication?
 - < 10%
 - 10-25%
 - 25-50%
 - 50-75%
 - > 75%
- How much time does it take you to administer medication?
 - What is the **longest** amount of time it has taken you? _____ (minutes)
 - What is the **least** amount of time it has taken you? _____ (minutes)
 - What is the **average** amount of time it has taken you? _____ (minutes)
- What bothers you most about the med carts? _____

11. Do you have any recommendations about the medication carts? _____

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc. (Hamilton Clinic) 905-549-2552 *Please save over*

- Do you have any recommendations about the medication administration process? _____
- Please rate the following aspect of your medication cart: (please circle)
 - a) **Height** too low just right too high
Comments: _____
 - b) **Organization** poor fine good
Comments: _____
 - c) **Surface area** too small just right too much
Comments: _____
 - d) **Maneuverability** easy average difficult
Comments: _____
 - e) **Weight** light fine heavy
Comments: _____
 - f) **Pill cradler - old** awkward to use normal easy to use
Comments: _____
 - g) **Pill cradler - new** awkward to use normal easy to use
Comments: _____
- Using the rating scale shown below, please rate the AVERAGE level of stress you feel at work on a day to day basis. (Please Circle)

Stress Overlapping area

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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- Think of how you feel AT THE END OF A WORK DAY. Fill out the chart below by rating your discomfort level on a scale of one to ten for each body part listed, and mark it in the box provided.
For example, if you have pain in your left thigh which you feel is a level "5 out of 10", place a "5" in the box marked "LEFT THIGH".
Like this: LEFT THIGH

NO discomfort Moderate discomfort EXTREME discomfort

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: _____

Thank you!

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Ergonomic Group Case Study

What we found:

- Medication Cart
 - 80% reported mod/sev **mid/low back pain**
 - 65% reported mod/sev pain in **right shoulder**
 - Stress, average was 7.8 (scale to 10)
- Major complaints involved
 - Poor organization of the carts (crowded)
 - Small surface area to work (large charting system)
 - Cart height problems (too high for some)
 - Awkward and forceful pill crushers
 - Problems with blister packs (repetitive tearing)



Getting the right fit!



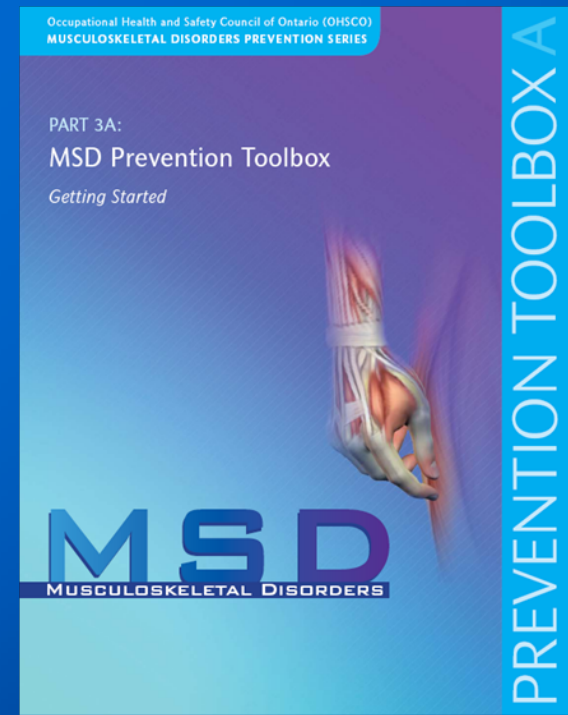
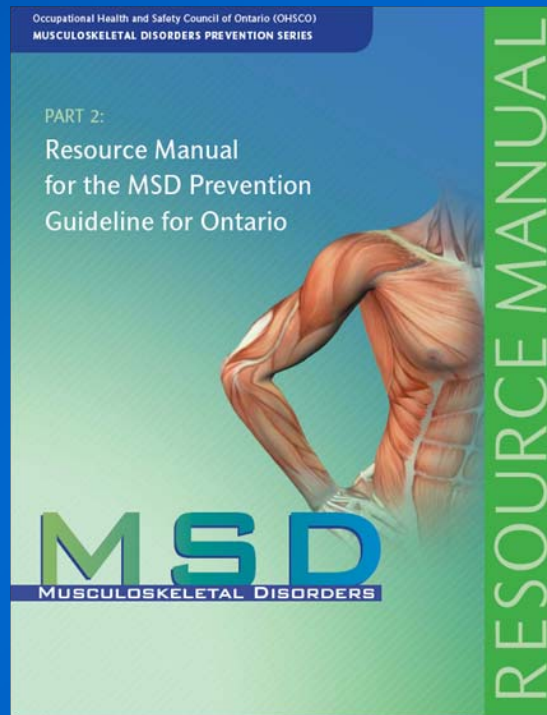
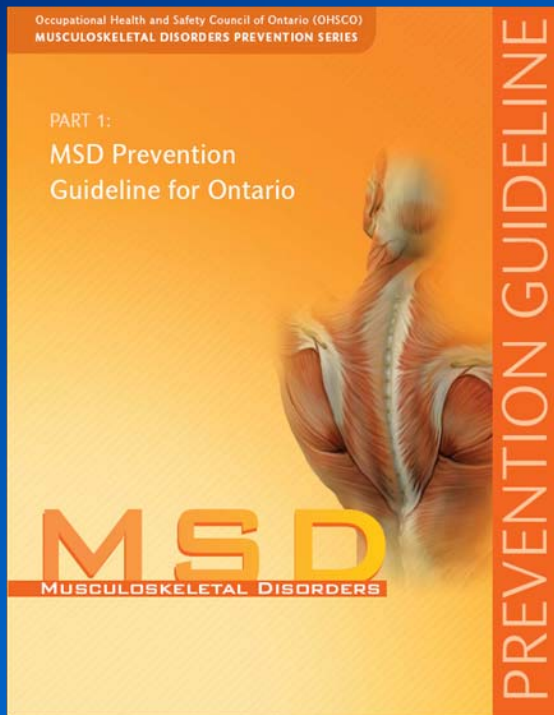
Ergonomic Group Case Study

Recommendations:

- Set-up a medication station in the dining area
- Modify the charting system
- Add an extra cart to the “heavy floors”
- Provide automatic crushers
- Place a cutter on each cart
- Provide optional cart designs to accommodate shorter workers



Ontario MSD Prevention Documents



Contact Information

**Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario
Workers Inc.**

848 Main St. E, Hamilton ON, L8M 1L9

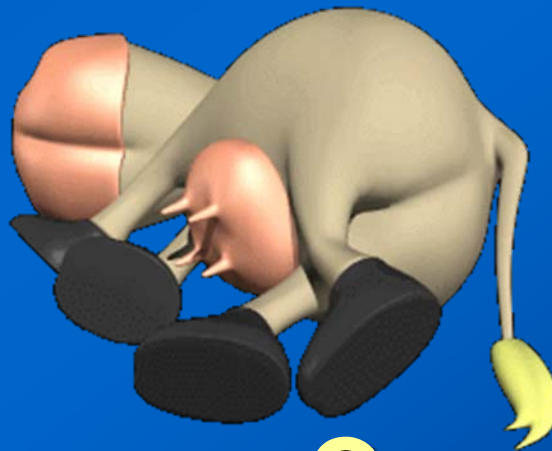
Tel: (905) 549-2552 or 1-800-263-2129

www.ohcow.on.ca



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Workers Inc.

All Done!



Questions or Comments?

