In this Issue (highlights):

1st International Symposium Advances Total Worker Health™
Kent Anger Wins Faculty Senate Award
Spring Symposium: Health Consequences of Sedentary Work
The 1st International Symposium to Advance Total Worker Health™ (TWH) was held October 6–8, 2014 on the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Together with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Office for Total Worker Health and 14 other prestigious partners, more than 500 scientists and practitioners from around the world came together to learn the state of the science and practice of TWH using a coordinated approach that integrates health protection and health promotion. As part of a packed agenda, the Oregon Healthy Work-force Center presented these talks:

- OHWC Director Kent Anger, Ph.D, with other TWH Center Directors, presented: Research Frontiers in Total Worker Health™: Unique Perspectives from the NIOSH TWH Centers of Excellence.
- Ryan Olson, Ph.D. chaired the “Total Trucker Health™: The Drive to Improve” symposium, and presented his research, “The SHIFT Intervention for Truck Drivers Produces Significant Weight Loss in a Randomized Trial”.
- Donald Truxillo, Ph.D. presented: Applying Psychological Lifespan Development Theory and Research to Interventions Targeting Older Workers.
- Diane Elliot, MD, presented: Taking an Evidence-Based Total Worker Health™ Program Online.
- Dr. Elliot also chaired the symposium, Teaming up for Total Worker Health™, which included the presentations, “A Conceptual Framework for Teams and Total Worker Health™” (presented by Dr. Elliot); SHIELD (Safety & Health Improvement: Enhancing Law Enforcement Department) Teams & a New Total Worker Health™ Model for Police Officers (Presented by Kerry Kuehl, MD, Ph.D.); SHIP: A Team-base Work-Life and Safety Support Intervention for Construction Workers (presented by Leslie Hammer, Ph.D.); and, COMPASS Teams: Creating Health & Safety “Communities of Practice” for Home Care Workers (presented by Dr. Olson.)
- Special Populations – Young Workers and Total Worker Health™ including papers presented by Diane Rohlman, Ph.D., and Megan Parish, MPH. (Developing a Methodology for Identifying and Prioritizing Factors in Young Workers Injuries: A Pilot Study; and, Technology Meets Total Worker Health: Evaluating Online Training for Young Workers).

Social Support, Mindfulness, and Workplace Health

Our fall symposium, Healthy Workplace Solutions, introduced evidence and new ideas for improving workplace wellbeing and health.

Dr. Lois Tetrick reminded us of the burden that stress plays in most of our lives, identifying top worker stressors as low salaries, lack of opportunity for job growth, job insecurity, uncertain job expectations and long hours. She pointed out that organizational level interventions – which can be so effective – are still relatively rare.

Dr. Robert Roeser provided insights on improving occupational health and wellbeing through mindfulness training. He brought us up to speed on the extent of peer-reviewed publications and research studies on mindfulness, along with the demonstrated success of his research with teachers and students using mindfulness to reduce stress and improve work and health outcomes.

Dr. Joel Bennett shared how successful and healthy organizations foster healthy social connections to improve individual and organizational resiliency, using leadership, management, champions, peer-to-peer and individual “touch points.”

OHWC researcher, Dr. Ryan Olson demonstrated the importance of combining environmental change with employee involvement together with social prompt and consequence for improved work, safety, and health.

You can watch a recorded webinar of this event on our symposium webpage at http://tinyurl.com/o7v6dsy
Congratulations are in order for Dr. Kent Anger, Associate Director of Applied Research at the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences and Director of the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center. Annually, faculty members at OHSU are recognized through the Faculty Senate Awards for their exceptional efforts in support of OHSU’s mission. During the ceremony, Dr. Anger received the 2014 Faculty Senate Award for Collaboration. Nominees for the 2014 Collaboration Award were from OHSU’s Affiliated Units and Institutes.

In endorsement letters provided by colleagues, Kent is described as productive, diligent, and energetic, and a genius at bringing together interdisciplinary experts to collaborate. He is a team player who has made extensive contributions to the development of workplace interventions aimed at improving the health and well-being of workers and their family members.

We offer our heartfelt congratulations to Kent.

Dr. Kent Anger with his wife, Billie.

September Begins Conference Season

September in Oregon is not only a beautiful month, but kicks off a cycle of safety, health and wellness conferences. The fall of 2014 was no exception, and in fact was even richer than usual!

Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU was a proud sponsor of the American Heart Association’s 5th Annual Worksite Wellness Summit, held September 17th, 2014 at the Oregon Convention Center. This year’s theme was titled “Power Up Your Wellness Program with new ideas to spark Total Worker Health”. More information on page 6.

Equally exciting was the 5th Annual National Conference in Healthcare Ergonomics, which came to Portland’s Oregon Convention Center on September 8-11, 2014. We were pleased to sponsor and participate in this high powered event.

Please join us for future conferences and events!
Sit less, move often, move more was the message from Dr. Nico Pronk, Senior Research Investigator, Health Partners, and Adjunct Professor, Harvard School of Public Health, during his keynote address at the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences Spring Symposium, Thursday June 5, 2014. His research showed that providing sit-stand desks in his company reduced sitting time and decreased low back pain in employees. More than one speaker recommended standing and walking for a few minutes following sitting for an hour or less. ‘Sitting is the new smoking’ was mentioned by more than one speaker, suggesting that prolonged sitting has serious negative health consequences.

Dr. Saurabh Thosar (Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences) followed with evidence that people who report prolonged sitting time die earlier — this is even true of individuals who are highly physically active. Consequences of sitting for as short a time as an hour are reduced blood flow in the thighs and increased blood pressure. Dr. Jennifer Hess warned that stretching and fitness is not a substitute for ergonomics. She focused on balance and muscle symmetry. For example, a worker returning too soon from an injury may avoid using a muscle that was not fully recovered, which can lead to asymmetric postures that produce further injuries.

Speakers provided examples of healthy exercise programs and addressed the need to provide exercise options that are culturally appropriate in order to maximize their effectiveness. A webcast of all the presentations is available at the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences Health & Safety Training web page under Outreach and Education (http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/croet/outreach/sedentary-and-stationary-work.cfm).
Welcome Summer Interns!

June brings us many new faces in the form of sharp and energetic college students. Summer 2014 was no exception, and we were pleased to greet our 14 summer interns who supported Occupational Health Sciences and Oregon Healthy Workforce Center research.

All of the students selected for these paid internships are either Oregon residents or attend Oregon schools. Students spent three months working alongside researchers and faculty on basic and applied research projects, and sharing their own research findings in poster presentations later in August.

Congratulations to the following students who were selected as our 2014 Summer Interns:

Aviva Browning – Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR – Anger Lab
Jami Cheng – Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD – Rohlman Lab
Devin Christiansen – Portland State University, Portland, OR – Anger Lab
Leanne Hicks – Portland State University, Portland, OR – Hammer Lab
Colleen Hunter – Pacific University, Forest Grove, OR – Olson Lab
Michael Jacobson – Reed College, Portland, OR – Butler Lab
Krista Leonard – Willamette University, Salem, OR – Rohlman Lab
Hilary Nichols – Western Washington Univ., Bellingham, WA – McCullough Lab
Tiffany Nguyen – Yale University, New Haven, CT – Rohlman Lab
Silvia Plascencia – Univ. of Portland, Portland, OR – Kretzschmar Lab
Grace Recht – Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, OH – Kuehl Lab
Ryan Stadnik – Univ. of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, CO – Spencer Lab
Madison Trowbridge – Linfield College, McMinnville, OR – Shea Lab
Jeana Yee – Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD – Olson Lab

Thank you to all students who applied to this program. Learn more about our Summer Internship Program at http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/research/centers-institutes/croet/outreach/awards.cfm
The American Heart Association Worksite Wellness Summit was held September 17, 2014 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. Over 300 participants learned about effective tools and techniques for improving health, safety, wellness and wellbeing – Total Worker Health. The Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences was the presenting sponsor supporting the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center’s Total Worker HealthTM (TWH) theme, also the Summit’s theme.

The Summit was keynoted by Renee Coombs of SAIF, Oregon’s largest workers’ compensation insurance company, who described her corporation’s transition to TWH, which she described as continually changing and growing in her comments on the panel that followed her keynote. Brian Passon led the panel.

After a physical activity break and lunch, the meeting broke into sessions on workforce wellness initiatives and strategies – and a session on establishing TWH programs in companies, led by Dede Montgomery of Occupational Health Sciences and Deb Fell-Carlson of SAIF.

The meeting ended with energizing talks by Dawn Robbins on diversity to empower wellness programs (looking thoughtfully to the future), Michaelle Davis on Campbell Global’s approach to Wellness (offering her help to others) and Evin Cole on the power of positive thinking (with examples of turning negative messages into positive ones). Interspersed with these interesting and interactive presentations were opportunities to interact with dozens of vendors who provided resources on TWH and wellness to the attendees.

And it should be said that AHA knows how to put on a meeting – two activity breaks and the healthiest breakfast (granola, fruit and yogurt) and lunch options ever. Meeting coordinators take note! Congratulations to Lanette Trickey and the coordinating committee of the American Heart Association Worksite Wellness Summit for bringing an energizing and compelling series of presentations.
Look Who's Standing Now

Occupational Health Sciences prioritized the installation of sit-stand work stations for our employees this past year. And as organizations have learned, we had to plan ahead to budget for this process.

Arranging standing options for desk-bound work was an important priority for our overall health and safety – we have closely followed and in some cases added to the research demonstrating the importance of standing and moving during the work day. Here’s some of what we learned:

- If funds are limited, prioritize allocation of work stations by total amount of time seated during the day, and personal interest, or develop a rotation plan.
- Install one or more sit-stand devices in communal areas to give staff the opportunity to test whether this is a good option for them, and to assist with selection of alternatives.
- Emphasize best practices for use – most people are best served by a combination of sitting and standing throughout the day: It is generally best to alternate standing and sitting. So, the stations should be easy to raise or lower.
- Encourage movement throughout the day. Download our tip sheet: Solutions to Get People Moving (http://tinyurl.com/qc9zbr7).

What’s happening in your workplace?

Resources:
Sedentary, Stationary and Physically Demanding Work - http://tinyurl.com/p26b8qw
The Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health (PNASH) Center Advisory Committee held its 2014 meeting at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), pictured below. PNASH is a NIOSH-funded regional Center that supports research projects and outreach in Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Idaho.

The current PNASH project in Oregon is designed to study stress in agricultural workers and develop and test an intervention to reduce stress in workers. Drs. Diane Rohlman and Kent Anger of OHSU and the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center (OHWC), sited at the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU, direct the project. Collaborators include Leda Garside, RN, Salud Services of Tuality Healthcare.

While this may seem to be a dizzying list of organizational names, it does reflect the degree to which federal and state funding enables linkages between scientists at different organizations, and projects are developed that require the expertise of scientists from different organizations. Each scientist is partly funded by NIOSH and state funding streams. PNASH Director Dr. Rich Fenske is on the left in the photo below.

A sample of PNASH-funded projects were presented. Examples included:

- OHWC Director Kent Anger noted the OHWC’s recent review of Total Worker Health (TWH) research and revealed that there is no research to evaluate TWH interventions (to improve health and safety and wellness/wellbeing) in agricultural settings. TWH is a possible new area of focus for the agricultural sector.
- Evidence of an association between asthma and elevated ammonia in air in farming areas, especially animal feeding areas (Catherine Karr of the University of Washington (UW), PI).
- Dr. Christopher Simpson (UW) described a new rapid measure of organophosphorus compound exposures, useful for workers applying the most widely-used agricultural pesticides worldwide, including some in Pacific Northwest tree fruit farms.
- Dr. Alice Larson spoke about her census of indigenous agricultural workers.
- Dr. Laurel Kincl described her new project with Dungeness crab workers.
- Nargess Shadbeh of the Oregon Law Center described the 10-year project to provide information on pesticide safety to Oregon’s indigenous workers through promotoras speaking directly to the workers, a project in danger of ending due to the end of grant funding. Other funding mechanisms to maintain the human resources to present the information on, essentially, the Worker Protection Standard to indigenous workers, included state government and industry.
As part of our outreach, we want you to know about the work we do and how it benefits workers and businesses in Oregon. We invite you to browse our website, meet our outreach team at conferences, attend our health and safety symposia, consider our scientific seminars sponsored by our research faculty, and/or visit the Institute to learn more and to use us as a resource.

Visit us at:

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