

## From the Guest Editor

---

# Workers and the Worksite: Research and Practice

It was with pleasure that I accepted the opportunity to put together another edition of the journal *WORK*. *WORK* is a pivotal publication for those in occupational rehabilitation who view research as a foundation and practice examples as a step toward the future.

Occupational rehabilitation professionals interact with the three main forces in work injury management and prevention, the medical professions, employers and workers. Through a strong educational background and additional competencies in occupational health, the occupational rehabilitation practitioner makes strong contributions by using function as a base for its interactive work.

This edition highlights significant practice advancements and research that strengthens the occupational rehabilitation position in evidence based medicine. We were fortunate to have an international group of professionals address specific portions of our practice. Read collectively, the group of articles paints a picture of current and future practice.

Isernhagen begins with a look at how occupational rehabilitation bridges the gap between the medical and employer communities through job function matching. Both research and practice parameters are covered.

Ege expertly addresses a new and important role of consultation, education, ergonomics and job coaching within industry. DeWeese demonstrates the value of such a system though the outcomes and methods noted in his case study. Both demonstrate a growth opportunity for occupational rehabilitation professionals.

Because evidence based practice is becoming the hallmark of programming, Schonstein and Verbeek take us into systematic reviews in occupational health. Both current limitations and opportunities for further research are addressed.

Oesch and colleagues present one of the few randomized controlled studies in occupational rehabilitation. The enhancement of function and return to work processes through FCE and functional based therapy make a strong statement to the efficacy that can be reached by structured programs.

A leading researcher in FCE, Reneman and colleagues provide new information and programs for use of FCE in upper extremity testing. As work related upper limb disorders increase, this specific testing will continue to become important.

Building on the importance of FCE in disability management, Clifton identifies its role in combination with the physician's independent medical examination. It follows the thread of a necessary interdisciplinary approach touched on by most authors.

Cotton and Adams explore the occupational rehabilitation's use of FCE in NSW, Australia. This shows us how evidence and actual practice may or may not be linked.

Glazner's work on cultural diversity is of interest to occupational rehabilitation professionals throughout the world. Programs may be evaluated through research and practice, but if we cannot connect proactively and respectfully with each client, we will not be effective.

Two articles focus on specific musculoskeletal problems. With arthritis being a factor in both work related and non work related injuries, the article by Mahalik and colleagues is very timely and informative. With low back pain comprising a third to a half of work problems, Soucy et al.'s discussion of low back pain issues in relationship to work rehabilitation brings clarity to specific issues. The findings in both articles have a universal applicability.

I thank Karen Jacobs, editor of *WORK*, all authors, the DSI group with Dennis Isernhagen and Aura Coppola, and the publisher of *WORK* for the opportunity to present this contemporary view of occupational rehabilitation.

*Susan J. Isernhagen PT*  
DSI Work Solutions, Inc.  
130 W. Superior St, Suite 625  
Duluth, MN 55802, USA  
Tel.: +1 218 625 1051  
Fax: +1 218 625 1052  
E-mail: [sisernhagen@dsiworksolutions.com](mailto:sisernhagen@dsiworksolutions.com)