

Introduction to Special Issue

Work Rehabilitation in Mainland China: Striving for better services and research

In recent years, the Chinese government has made great efforts to establish an insurance system for work-related injuries and we have witnessed tremendous developments in its workers' compensation system, provision of work rehabilitation services and research on service efficacy. These perhaps were fuelled by the enactment of the Trial Measures for Employees' Work Injury Insurance (No. 266) in 1996. Under the new legislation, government agencies had the responsibility to provide compensation and medical services to those who were involved in injuries at work. In 2003/4, the legislation was further refined to include the Regulations on Insurance for Work-related Injuries which emphasizes prevention of injury at work and provision of rehabilitation for injured workers. Injured workers have the rights to receive work rehabilitation and all expenses are covered by the Work Injury Insurance Foundation.

Ten years ago, the concept of work rehabilitation and return to work was non-existence. A small proportion of the injured workers received rehabilitation in general hospitals. It was obvious that these workers were engaged in medical rehabilitation which placed the focus on training of bodily function and if possible discharged from hospital to home. In 2001, the Guangdong Provincial Work Injury Rehabilitation Center was established. The Centre is the first of its kind in the country directly funded by Department of Labor and Social Security. Since then, it has taken up the responsibility to spearhead the development of a service model for the rest of the provinces in the country. Besides, it has served as the national research centre for assessment and return to work for injured workers. The Centre has planned for expanding its operation to a 600-bed in-patient and outpatient rehabilitation centre which can cater more workers with injuries receiving better rehabilitation services and return to work.

The Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Hong Kong Workers' Health Centre has joint force with Guangdong Provincial Work Injury Rehabilitation Center to launch various services and research projects. These projects were on enhancing injured workers to return to a gainful work or at least resume a work role. We are pleased to see that the time spent and efforts paid by the joint research team in the last few years have produced high quality papers which are included in this special issue. More importantly, these papers reflect the rapid development of the services and research in work rehabilitation. As Mainland China is becoming a major economic force worldwide, the practitioners and researchers in work rehabilitation has gained an excellent platform to develop their expertise. Their endeavor will benefit all the workers in Mainland China and in the long run benefit the professional and scientific world at large.

Guest Editors

Chetwyn Chan, PhD

Adjunct Professor

Guangdong Provincial Work Injury

Rehabilitation Centre

Professor and Head

Department of Rehabilitation Sciences

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Tang Dan, MD

Professor and President

Guangdong Provincial Work Injury

Rehabilitation Centre