

Foreword

Workplace Violence and Aggression

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Workplace violence and aggression continue to be a public health concern for millions of workers all over the world. In the last decade there has been a significant shift in focus on workplace violence as an occupational health concern. The Workplace Violence Intervention Research Workshop (April 5–7, 2000) held in Washington, DC was a major force in directing workplace violence prevention research and policy needs. The Workshop was key in: (1) presenting a typology categorizing the nature of the relationship (or lack thereof) of perpetrator with the victim, (2) identifying workplace violence prevention approaches that encompass all three intervention levels found in the public health model, (3) summarizing laws and regulations in place to prevent workplace violence, (4) sharing industry and labor perspectives, and (5) drafting a research agenda to help organize and guide workplace violence research and control efforts. Shortly thereafter in 2003, a special issue devoted to Violence in the Workplace in *Clinics in Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (Carol Wilkinson and Corinne Peek-Asa as guest editors) provided a much-needed collection of research and approaches from a diversity of disciplines: public health, economics, legal, safety engineering, medicine, psychology, business, occupational health, human resources and law enforcement/security. Meanwhile, a special issue of *Employee Rights and Employment Policy Journal* focused on Workplace Fairness and the Institute for Law and the Workplace in 2004 presented the role bullying plays in the workplace and the challenges for its prevention. During the same period, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) organized a conference for stakehold-

ers in reducing workplace violence (November 17–19, 2004) that resulted in two NIOSH-sponsored workshops on workplace bullying and psychological aggression (February 24–25 and September 1, 2005). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has published documents highlighting workplace violence prevention among healthcare and social service workers (2004) and targeting late-night retail establishments (2009). Similarly, NIOSH created and released a training and educational DVD entitled ‘Violence on the Job’ (2004) as a resource for practical prevention measures concerning workplace violence.

The past decade has given rise to many opportunities for collaboration on many aspects of workplace violence. Researchers and practitioners have multidisciplinary perspectives and approaches readily accessible. Partnering for research to practice efforts has been observed across federal, state and local levels, and likewise for planning and implementation projects among public health agencies and research institutions, industry groups, and academia. The surveillance of workplace violence has grown to provide both targeted (emerging trends, high-risk populations) and comprehensive information as needed (national surveys). Recently, several systematic reviews have been published that identify high quality studies to allow for evaluation of evidence-based intervention strategies. Currently there is recognition for the importance of evaluating the adoption of effective workplace violence interventions among the high-risk workplaces that need them. Research focused on multi-dimensional models defining the problem and evaluating prevention programs in various settings (small businesses, nursing units) contin-

ues to play an important role in ensuring interventions are as effective as possible.

It is hoped that future research to practice efforts will involve international partnering to provide sustainable interventions in other countries. Research efforts describing the epidemiology of workplace violence should include a life course perspective. Additional systematic reviews focused on specific populations or violence prevention programs would provide evidence-based recommendations needed to further tr-

anslational research to prevention. Continued interdisciplinary partnerships are crucial for developing effective and practical intervention strategies. Over the last decade, I believe we have made great progress in advancing workplace violence as an important, preventable occupational health issue. These two special issues on workplace violence are timely and encourage reflection on past accomplishments and future directions.