

Opioids and the Workplace - Risk Factors and Solutions

New Solutions seeks high quality manuscripts for a special issue dedicated to work and the opioid crisis. The workplace has been the forgotten element in the national response to the opioid crisis, even though workers and their families have been particularly impacted nationwide. A number of studies have shown that certain high-risk industries and occupations, such as construction and extraction, are at high risk for opioid misuse, addiction, and overdose fatalities. The workplace has been a pathway to opioid use and addiction due to physical or emotional pain related to workplace injury, illness, and stress. The occupational health community is working to identify risk factors tied to the conditions of work that contribute to the potential for addiction among all affected populations. Of particular interest is the development of effective interventions to transform the workplace into a supportive setting for prevention -- a setting where workers can talk about the uncomfortable issues of mental health and substance use without fear of job loss or discrimination, and can access effective resources for treatment and recovery. Emerging research, case studies, and advocacy programs will be reviewed in this issue.

Manuscripts will be accepted until June 30, 2020. Accepted papers will be published March 2021. Authors should address the occupational/environmental health policy implications of their research. Submitted manuscripts should reflect the authors' most current work.

Potential topic areas of interest include:

- Innovative research on the epidemiology of opioid use and overdose mortality by occupation and industry. This may include the use of death index and/or workers' compensation data. Epidemiology papers should provide evidence of the impact of the opioid crisis in the workplace that illustrates the urgency for prevention and policy initiatives.
- Description of opioid prescriptions and use in state and federal workers' compensation systems and impact of efforts to curtail misuse and addiction.
- Description and effectiveness of alternative pain treatment strategies to prevent opioid misuse and addiction, relieve pain of work-related injury or illness, and help workers regain function.
- Research on workplace factors and opioid use. How work injury and related pain, illness, stress, harassment/bullying, and other occupational hazards contribute to opioid use/misuse and addiction.
- Work organization factors that may lead to occupational mental health problems and self-medication, such as excessive use of overtime, fatigue, split shifts, understaffing, speedup, Taylorism, electronic surveillance, work/life imbalance, presenteeism, and lack of access to paid sick leave.

- Impact of systems of work organization, such as gig work, new public management, managerialism, lean healthcare and lean production on working conditions, worker stress and health.
- Interventions to reduce and prevent occupational risk factors and related pain that may lead to opioid use, misuse, and addiction.
- Structure, function and effectiveness of employee assistance, member assistance, and peer support programs in addressing mental health and substance use problems in workplaces.
- The extent and impact of stigma and discrimination in preventing workers from seeking help for mental health and substance use problems, as well as approaches to reduce stigma and discrimination.
- The impact of mental ill health, prescription drug use and illicit substance use on worker impairment and safety and health in the workplace.
- Effectiveness of training that addresses prevention of occupational exposure to fentanyl and other opioids, opioids in the workplace, as well as train-the-trainer, and leadership training programs. This could also include organization, delivery, and impact of opioid stand downs (industry wide safety and health events that include press and short talks to bring focused activity to a hazard) and other similar events.
- Impact of workplace policies that treat opioid use disorder and other substance use problems as a disciplinary problem rather than a medical condition. This may include punitive drug testing programs, zero tolerance policies, and last chance agreements that tend to discourage workers who are struggling from coming forward for help. Also, impact of efforts to reform such policies.
- Impact on federal workers who are struggling with mental health and substance use issues due to federal and state drug policies and Federal Executive Order 12564 and Public Law 100-7, the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Program.
- Access to mental health and substance use treatment and recovery resources via workplace policies and programs.
- Workplace policies and programs that help integrate workers in recovery back into the workplace by providing accommodations, drug testing, and access to recovery resources.
- Description and impact of interventions to help injured workers avoid opioid misuse and addiction. This may include information or training on opioid misuse and talking to healthcare providers about alternative pain treatment. This area also includes programs for integrating injured workers back into the workforce by providing workplace accommodations that address physical restrictions and increasing access to physical therapy and holistic health modalities.
- Research focused on work organization and other workplace hazards in the addiction treatment/behavioral health agency workplace, including the role of contracting, privatization, health policy, and health insurance.

Potential types of articles include:

Comment and Controversy - short to longer commentary pieces that provide more substantial discussion than an editorial. Articles that raise important issues or a call to action.

Features - research papers

Scientific Solutions - discussions of science and scientific research that provides a foundation for establishing new policy directives. Uses innovative methodology (such as innovative mixed-methods research papers) or uses longstanding methods in a new application.

Movement Solutions - papers that provide discussions of social movement debates and practices addressing environmental and occupational health policy needs.

Documents - reports and other documents published elsewhere but warrant republication.

Voices - interviews with workers, activists, advocates, researchers, and policymakers, with relevance to occupational and environmental health policy and politics.

Book/Movie Reviews

For full details of article types, see: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/NEW>

Manuscript submission guidelines

Each manuscript should:

1. Comply with New Solution's Manuscript Guidelines, available at:
 - a. <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/NEW>
2. Be submitted via the New Solutions web site at:
 - a. <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/new>
 1. Please complete the author profile information for each author
3. Have a core manuscript (that is, excluding abstract (150-word limit), acknowledgments, reference list, tables, and figures) length of 10 to 20 pages. Please paginate your submission consecutively starting with the title page. Double-spacing required. Citations and references in Vancouver (SAGE) style.

Questions may be directed to the guest editors of the special issue:

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