

South Africa, like most Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states with precarious working conditions, still has limited and/or absent access to OEHS. This is a phenomenon that 'echoes an uncaring society', especially on the part of the South African tripartite leaders (regulator, employer and trade union movement), which suggest that as a country we may be falling short of the African spirit of UBUNTU.

Broadly UBUNTU is an essential human virtue with compassion and humanity embedded in it. It embodies the spirit of the greater good of growing together and caring for one another as human beings, families, communities and nations. In OEHS numerous statutes give responsibilities to tripartite leaders on compliance with minimum OEHS standards and services for the workforce. Thus, this paper looks at the spirit of UBUNTU and OEHS by addressing the question: 'Do tripartite leaders (human beings) in their roles in managing the country's economy and providing OEHS services – which are a basic human right for the workforce (human beings) – consider the spirit of UBUNTU in executing their responsibilities?'

#### 1645c QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE AND VALUE OF WORK OF CANCER SURVIVORS

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**Introduction** Previous research on employees with a chronic disease, including employees who have been diagnosed and treated for cancer, mainly focused on work outcomes such as absence from work, productivity and unemployment. It has been seldom taken into account how employees with a chronic disease experience their working life and how they value their work.

The concept of Quality of Working Life encompasses the subjective work experiences of working individuals. This study aimed to:

- describe issues that contribute to the Quality of Working Life (QWL) of employees with a chronic physical disease, and
- to identify important QWL issues of cancer survivors.

**Methods** A systematic literature search was conducted to identify experiences and perceptions during the working life of employees with a chronic physical disease. These experiences were synthesised into issues that contributed to their QWL. During three focus groups with 24 cancer survivors, issues contributing to their QWL were discussed.

**Results** An overview of 73 QWL issues was found which could be identified into five categories:

- individual work perceptions including issues about enjoyment and evaluation work of life priorities;
- social structure and environment containing issues about disclosure, discrimination, misunderstanding and awareness by employers and colleagues;
- organisational characteristics such as communication and decision making;
- job characteristics including work accommodations; and
- effect of disease and treatment on work ability.

The issues discussed by cancer survivors in the focus groups included several themes including feelings, such as 'feeling safe and familiar at work' and work issues such as 'working gives me structure in life'.

**Discussion** This study described QWL issues of employees with a chronic physical disease and of cancer survivors. These issues may function as a starting point for occupational support and evaluation of OHS studies.

#### 1645d MUNDANE JOBS – MOTIVATION FOR WORK

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**Introduction** Mundane (Latin *mundānus*=worldly) jobs are unexciting, boring, monotonous day to day work jeopardising psychosocial health and safety of the workers at the workplace. These routine jobs do require workers to perform with sufficient levels of *task identity*, *task significance*, and *skill variety* to feel their work has meaning and value. Sufficiently high levels of *autonomy* and *Task Feedback* inspires the worker to feel responsibility for the work. The combined effect of these psychological states results in desired personal and work outcomes: intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, performance quality, low absenteeism, and low turnover rate.

**Methods** Workers involved in many of the hazardous, mundane works (sewage cleaning and maintenance workers, tannery workers, e-waste workers, brick kiln workers, stone crusher workers, landfill site workers, welders, street vendors etc.) with poor health outcomes related to their workplace exposures having high morbidity and mortality were interviewed/reviewed during the base line of their respective occupational health studies. Reasons for them choosing the said occupation, willingness to continuing the same work, or choosing the same work for their kids were looked for.

**Results** The collective response of sewage workers is – the work is regarded as menial with no dignity of labour, discriminatory, stigmatising, low paid, with no job security, no secure livelihood or other work options, no promotions, having no personal identification being known as worker only and characteristically lack of fundamental rights of equality, life and liberty. They have no bargaining power for wages, safety and health, to demand, to resist, to protest, with no allowances/benefits, and they hide community, caste and their identity from society at large.

**Discussion** Although people do continue with their mundane jobs with some intrinsic basic motivations, but we need to integrate the psychosocial aspects and behavioural modifications of work addressing the above issues to promote health and safety at workplace.

#### 1645e HEALTH PROMOTION AND CONSTRUCTIVE ERGONOMICS: AN INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE WORKING CONDITIONS AND WELL-BEING AT WORK

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**Introduction** Constructive ergonomics is characterised by a developmental and participatory approach of occupational health involving the workers at every stage of the prevention intervention. Philosophically, the worker is conceptualised as an active person engaged with his own values in a complex social and technical environment, and able to (re)act on this environment. Work can be therefore either a resource for personal development and well-being or a source of negative health effects and ethical conflicts in case of contradiction between the work physical, mental and emotional demands and workers' capabilities or personal values. The concept of 'operational leeway' is defined by the space of freedom available or constructed by workers individually or collectively, to elaborate alternative ways of working and strategies according to their skills, knowledge and values in order to achieve production targets while reducing as much as possible the psychological, mental and physical strains and avoiding negative health effects.

**Methods** We will explain the similarities between the concepts of constructive ergonomics, capabilities and effective freedom of choice – proposed by the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen -, and workers' power to act developed by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. According to ergonomics of activity, workers' power to act may be created when operational leeway and capabilities are sufficient to allow workers developing their own working strategies and skills according to their personal values. According to constructive ergonomics, implementing work situations and work organisation allowing the development of sufficient operational leeway and power to act is a key issue to promote workers' health and sustainable working conditions.

**Discussion** Constructive ergonomics argues in favour of a developmental perspective of health at work. Its usefulness to improve strategies of promotion of health at work and promote integrated approaches of the prevention in Occupational Health will be discussed.

#### 1645f DESPITE THE GAPS, PURSUING ON A WORKPLACE CULTURE OF KINDNESS

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Efforts to protect people's health and wellbeing in the Region of the Americas have evolved to activate massive and collective health promotion activities for workers throughout the region. For this purpose, PAHO organises and celebrates Wellness Week to promote healthy living, healthy working and healthy life styles since 2011. Facing the burdens of modern work and the ways technology, globalisation and human relationships have changed, we examined the advances done since the campaign launched in 2014 aiming to make workplace kindness a cultural value, followed by the respectful workplace policy issued in 2015; the campaign to create awareness and manage workplace stress in 2016; and the latest advance

towards positive organisation and enhancing resilience at the workplace in 2017.

After developing each yearly activity, reports on the results of were made showing their impressive impact. Activities carried out had different levels of results. Very positive testimonies expressing gratefulness for the actions taken and embracing satisfaction, empowerment and sense of pertinence to the workplace. However, the persistent presence of stressful working conditions and challenges during work processes were acknowledged, affecting work-life balance and their physical and mental health. As well, employment conditions were also mentioned as a source of stress and dissatisfaction.

To improve workplace performance, further actions are needed to:

- address specific psychosocial risks;
- integrate organisational strategies for enhancing healthy and positive organisational skills;
- promote protective psychosocial and behavioural factors; and
- promote modifications to workstyles.

All together will allow to address the gaps that still persist.

#### 1645g THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK

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**Introduction** In its most ideal state, work can provide an opportunity for us to experience and explore ourselves through our work. We can experience ourselves through our identity, our understanding as a whole person, our core values, our internal motivations, and our behaviours that arise from our core values and motivations.

**Methods** One way to explore all this is through the practice of inquiry—simply by asking, who are we when we work? The answer is not some kind of intellectual exercise where we analyse or quantify ourselves. Instead, the answer comes from how we experience ourselves, our coworkers, and the work itself.

**Results** In the right work environment, we have the opportunity to experience ourselves in ways that are unique for each of us. We can come to understand ourselves through our work—through our awareness, our relationships, our self-excellence, and how we bring our whole selves, our human spirit, to our work. When work nourishes the human spirit, we can live the greater parts of ourselves. This is the potential experience of the whole person, because indeed, each person is greater than the sum of their parts.

**Discussion** Because of who we are at work, we can dedicate ourselves to our families, we can learn and grow, we can create, and we can contribute to something bigger than ourselves. The ultimate gift of work is that experiencing ourselves at work can lead to experiencing ourselves in life. The reverse is equally true, because who we are in life is who we are at work. Keats wrote, 'Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced.' Work has the potential to provide that real experience.