

Presentation Title	Place in Schedule
Employee safety, health and well-being focus group findings from one Veterans Affairs medical center	Concurrent Session 4.2 <i>Day 3 – Thursday May 10th, 2018 1:15 – 2:30pm</i>
Description of Presentation	Presenter Name(s) And Credentials
<p>Problem Statement: Work-related factors and health factors beyond the workplace jointly contribute to many safety and health problems in employee populations.1 Evidence supports the effectiveness of workplace interventions that integrate health protection and health promotion programs.2-4 Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has organizational structures aimed at promoting worker health and wellbeing, though they are operationally distinct: Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), Employee Health and Well-being (EHW), and employee benefits (HR). Designed as a multi-year operational pilot project, we intended to align aspects of OSH, EHW, and HR at one VA location to implement an integrated intervention to determine its feasibility and effectiveness. Here we present results from focus groups designed to inform pilot efforts. Specifically, focus groups were conducted to better understand (1) how the work environment and conditions of work influence employee safety, health and well-being (ESHW); and (2) how ESHW impacts the VA mission.</p> <p>Methods: Nine one-hour focus groups were conducted with leadership, supervisor, and front-line employee groups in October 2016. Focus groups were audio recorded and audio recordings transcribed. Content analysis was performed and emergent themes coded and summarized across all transcripts. Common emergent themes were identified if at least two employees reported them across all transcripts.</p> <p>Outcomes and Results: Fifty-five employees participated in the focus groups. Six common themes emerged including: knowledge of current ESHW programs; barriers to program participation; suggestions for future programs; stressful working conditions that impact ESHW; health hazards that impact ESHW;</p>	<p>Tamara M. Schult, PhD, MPH <i>Employee Health and Well-being, Occupational Health Services, Veterans Health Administration</i></p>
	<p>Eve M. Nagler, ScD, MPH, CHES <i>Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and HSPH Center for Work, Health, and Well-being</i></p>
	<p>Nancy Gendreau, NP <i>VA Boston Health Care System</i></p>

and other organizational factors affecting ESHW.

Supporting quotes include:

Theme 1: Current Program Knowledge

“The workplace violence prevention program has a comprehensive group of individuals that gets together and discusses workplace violence and implements processes to reduce and mitigate.”

Theme 2: Participation Barriers

“Aren’t the MOVE program, smoking cessation, and yoga class only for Veterans/patients?”

Theme 3: Program Suggestions

“I think more offerings need to be scheduled during the day. When you have been here 8-9 hours, you don’t want to stay the extra hour.”

Theme 4: Stressful Working Conditions

“When you talk about psychological stress, what I see is when management changes, there’s not much of a lead-up to it or just like all of a sudden you’ve got a new nurse manager...that’s very stressful.”

Theme 5: Health Hazards

“This is a field we chose to work in [inpatient psych] but there’s also times where you feel that there’s a dangerousness to it (i.e., patient violence).”

Theme 6: Organizational Factors

“I think that we need to convince top administration that to reduce stress by having things like this offered to the employees is good—stress levels go down, the output of their workload would increase.... but it’s not just the existence of the programs, but the time to participate in them.”

Practical Implications and Conclusions: Focus group participants identified organizational and structural elements of their work that impact ESHW, which could be targets for future intervention(s) including barriers to participation (lack of dedicated time to participate), stressful working conditions (staffing shortages, scheduling practices), and organizational support (leadership support, VA culture).

References:

1. Schulte PA, Pandalai S, Wulsin V, Chun H. Interaction of occupational and personal risk factors in workforce health and safety. *American Journal of Public Health*, 2012; 102: 434-448.

2. Hymel PA, Loeppke RR, Baase CM, et al. Workplace health protection and promotion: A new pathway for a healthier – and safer -- workforce. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 2011; 53(6): 695-702.
3. Sorensen G, McLellan D, Dennerlein JT, et al. Integration of health protection and health promotion: Rationale, indicators, and metrics. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 2013; 55(12 Suppl): S12-S18.
4. Anger WK, Elliot DL, Bodner T, et al. Effectiveness of Total Worker Health interventions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 2015; 20: 226-47.