

# Welcome to the Society for Occupational Health Psychology Newsletter!



Society for Occupational Health Psychology

Volume 2, January 2008

## Editor's Welcome



Irvin Sam Schonfeld, Editor

City College of the City University of New York

ischonfeld@ccny.cuny.edu

### Brief Note from the Editor

I welcome readers to the second issue of the Newsletter of the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. The newsletter staff (Kizzy Parks, Joe Hurrell, Janet-Barnes-Farrell, Kim Davies-Schrils, Leslie Golay, and I) organized this issue such that it would go to press before the Work, Stress, and Health 2008 conference. Bob Sinclair, the incoming president of SOHP, wrote about the future of our organization, which is now a cosponsor of the conference. The conference will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. from March 6 to 8. The article by Leslie Hammer, Steve Sauter, and Julia Limanowski in this issue provides a number of conference highlights. I hope that the readers will attend.

Paul Spector and Peter Chen contributed an article that describes NIOSH-supported Education and Research Centers (ERCs), resources that could be very helpful to our members. Paul Landsbergis compiled a series of comments by people knowledgeable about ERCs to follow up the article by Paul and Peter.

The article by Carrie Bulger and Peter Chen covers a new component to the annual SIOP meeting that ought to be of interest to the OHP community. Carrie also wrote a short piece alerting our readers to a pair of important roundtable discussions on education and training, one to take place at the upcoming Work, Stress, and Health conference and the other to take place in November 2008 at the EA-OHP conference in Valencia, Spain.

Kizzy Parks and Kristin Charles address job-related concerns particular to I/O psychologists who have an interest in OHP. Kizzy and Kristin interviewed four OHP-oriented I/O psychologists about the job-search process. While the focal concern of the article is I/O psychologists, the article should be of interest to psychologists from a variety of disciplines. I am planning for our next issue to publish an article about job-related matters that are relevant to graduate students in other disciplines within psychology who have an interest in OHP.

Leigh Schmitt followed up her article in the first issue of the *Newsletter* with a new article that describes a number of more modest ways to implement employee wellness programs. I anticipate that in our next issue, Leigh will provide our readers with a link to an online survey, the purpose of which is to learn the various roles our membership plays in connection to wellness programs.

In this issue, Lois Tetrick wrote about the role reviewers play in the publication of the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. *JOHP* is our journal. We serve our discipline when we lend your expertise by volunteering to review articles for *JOHP*. A few days after Lois submitted the piece, she asked me to review an article for *JOHP*. Given what she wrote in the article, and despite the workload involved in publishing this newsletter, I could not refuse.

Jim McCubbin contributed an article on the connection between health psychology and occupational health psychology. I commissioned this article because I think it would be a good idea to involve more health psychologists in OHP. The articles by (a) Carrie Bulger and Peter Chen and (b) Kizzy Parks and Kristin Charles underline the fact that a sizable fraction of the researchers and practitioners who are involved in OHP have I/O backgrounds. In the spirit of diversity, it is important to emphasize the connection of OHP to other disciplines within psychology.

Whatever your affiliation to OHP, the newsletter has something for you. We report on the upcoming Work, Stress, and Health conference, the future of the Society, ERCs, job hunting, journal editing, wellness, health psychology, and the role of intellectual diversity. I would like to encourage readers to think about articles they would like to see in the newsletter. If you would like to write an article for a later issue, send me an email ([ischonfeld@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:ischonfeld@ccny.cuny.edu)).

I look forward to seeing you at the conference.

Irvin Sam Schonfeld, Editor  
City College of the City University of New York

Editor:  
Irvin Sam Schonfeld

Associate Editors:  
Joe Hurrell  
Kizzy Parks

### Inside this issue:

Work Stress and Health 2008 Leslie Hammer, Steven Sauter, and Julia Limanowski	2
NIOSH-Funded Education and Research Centers Paul E. Spector and Peter Chen	3-4
Addendum: Additional Exam- ples of OHP-ERC Cooperation Paul Landsbergis	4
I-O Psychologists in Conference Carrie Bulger and Peter Chen	5
OHP Interventions: Wellness Programs Leigh Schmitt	6-7
Reviewing at the <i>JOHP</i> Lois Tetrick	8-9
Education and Training Committee Carrie Bulger	9
Looking at OHP from a Health Psychology Perspective James McCubbin	10
Looking Toward the Future of SOHP Bob Sinclair	11
OHP Career Advice: Lessons from Recent Graduates Kizzy Parks and Kristin Charles	11-13

**WORK, STRESS, AND HEALTH 2008:  
Healthy and Safe Work Through Re-  
search, Practice, and Partnerships**

Washington, DC March 6-8

With continuing Education Workshops on March 5

Leslie B. Hammer  
Portland State University

Steven Sauter  
Julia Limanowski  
National Institute of  
Occupational Safety and Health

The 7th International Conference on Occupational Stress and Health is just around the corner-- with over 500 papers and posters from all points of the globe. For the first time ever, SOHP will be joining with APA and NIOSH in sponsorship of this conference, beginning a partnership that is anticipated to continue into future Work, Stress, and Health (WSH) conferences. In keeping with the theme of the conference *Healthy and Safe Work Through Research, Practice, and Partnerships*, over 100 papers and posters will focus on applications and translation of research to practice. Other topics featured at the conference include work-family interface, organizational climate, health disparities, stress in developing countries, bullying and violence, workplace flexibility, and traumatic stress and resilience. An exciting program is lined up, with pre-conference workshops, awards ceremonies, SOHP and Conference receptions, and events for students - all set in the stimulating environment of Washington, DC.

Continuing Education Workshops are being chaired by Autumn Krauss and include the topics:

**Diffusion of Innovation and Evidence-Based Practices  
Safety Climate Research and Practice**

**Traumatic Stress and Resilience**

**Grant Funding for Occupational Health Research; the  
Business Case for Workplace Safety and Health and**

**A Cultural Competence Workshop for Researchers and  
Practitioners**

Our **Opening Session Panel** will take place the morning of March 6 and features the topic of **Research to Practice**. The panel was designed to include thought leaders, researchers and practitioners from different sectors who are especially qualified to address the conference on the importance of research translation and on ways to overcome obstacles in this arena. The panel includes **John Howard**, MD, MPH, JD, LLM, Director, NIOSH, **Robin Baker**, PhD, U. California, Berkeley, Director of the Labor Occupational Health Program, **Daniel Conti**, PhD, JPMorgan Chase, Director, EAP, **Mary L. Durham**, PhD, Director, Center for Health Research, Kaiser Permanente, and **Kathleen E. Christensen**, PhD, Director, Workplace, Workforce, and Working Families Program, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, serving as the moderator.

The conference Awards program was orchestrated by Vicki Magley and Naomi Swanson with contributions from Ted Scharf. Similar to past conferences, we will be presenting the **Lifetime Career Achievement Award** to honor two individuals who have made extraordinary, life-long contributions to the work, stress and health field and, for the first time, we will also be presenting the parallel **Early Career Achieve-**

**ment Award** to recognize early exceptional contributions. The **Best JOHP Article Award** will be presented to the best single paper from 2006 & 2007 that appeared in APA's *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. Two competitions, the **Best Practices Evaluation Competition** and the **Best Student Research Competition**, acknowledge several of the best papers presented at the conference. Finally, the **Advancement of OHP Award** will acknowledge a colleague whose dedication to the development of the field of OHP has made years of scholarship & application possible.

Chris Cunningham has spearheaded the graduate student focused activities. Special attention is being paid to graduate students for the 2008 conference. Throughout the planning of sessions and logistics for the conference, the concerns and needs of students were considered. This resulted in dramatically reduced registration fees for students as well as the following series of student-friendly special events and features, including the **Pre-conference workshop** on finding, writing, and obtaining grant funding for occupational health research. This session has been designed especially for advanced graduate students and junior faculty members just getting started with the grants process. More details on this session can be found under the Pre-conference Workshops tab of the website or go directly to [http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh\\_workshops.html](http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh_workshops.html).

The conference organizers offer **special recognition** to students competing for conference research awards. In the conference program, student papers and posters competing for this award will be highlighted with a special symbol. As professionals, we should spend some time visiting these poster, paper, and symposia sessions in particular to facilitate networking and sharing constructive feedback.

A **new professional opportunities resource** will also be rolled out at the conference. With the support of SOHP, the Graduate Student Issues Committee will be debuting a web-based posting service that describes occupational health related jobs, fellowships, and other opportunities. Coinciding with this debut will be a professional development resource table located near the registration area of the conference. Look for these exciting postings and materials prepared especially for students. Finally, a **special lunch-time session** has been assembled to provide students with insights into the process of turning their OHP interests into a career. Research- and practice-oriented applications will be discussed.

Robert Sinclair and Peter Chen have been organizing the specific SOHP events, including an informal member gathering on Wednesday evening hosted by the SOHP Graduate Student Issues Committee. On Friday evening, SOHP will hold its business meeting (open to all conference attendees) immediately followed by a general reception. The events for that evening will include introductions of the new SOHP executive council and presentation of two awards - the **JOHP best paper award** and the **Advancement of OHP Award**.

We are very excited about the conference and look forward to seeing everyone. For a quick overview of the conference program and registration arrangements, check the conference website at <http://www.apa.org/pi/work/wsh.html>. Don't wait too long to register--rooms are going fast!

See you in March!

Leslie, Steve, and Julia



Leslie B. Hammer  
Past President SOHP  
Portland State  
University

"An exciting program is lined up, with pre-conference workshops, awards ceremonies, SOHP and Conference receptions, and events for students - all set in the stimulating environment of Washington, DC."



United States Capitol  
Washington, DC Library

## NIOSH-Funded Education and Resource Centers (ERCs)

Paul E. Spector

Department of Psychology Uni-  
versity of South Florida

Peter Chen

President of SOHP

Department of Psychology Colo-  
rado State University

One way in which the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health fulfills its mission to enhance workplace health and safety is through NIOSH's network of 17 Education and Research Centers (ERCs). The ERCs are university-based centers that promote occupational health and safety in a variety of ways, including graduate education, research, community outreach, and continuing education, to name a few. With a focus on occupational health and safety, ERCs are natural partners for occupational health psychologists and OHP graduate students. Faculty members can find potential partners for interdisciplinary research in ERCs. Students can find courses that enhance their OHP training in topics like epidemiology, safety, and behavioral medicine, as well as provide other research and training experiences.

The 17 ERCs are spread throughout the U.S. The main ERC page on the NIOSH website provides a map showing ERC locations: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/oep/centers.html>. These locations are found throughout the country, but tend to be in the most populated areas along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, and the Great Lakes. Most of the centers are located in schools of public health, although faculty and programs can be spread across different colleges within a university and even across universities.

The core disciplinary areas of ERCs are industrial hygiene, occupational health nursing, occupational medicine, and occupational safety. Some ERCs have other "specialized areas" that include OHP: (1) the Mountain and Plains (MAP) ERC, which is a collaboration of four universities in Colorado ([www.coloradosph.org/maperc](http://www.coloradosph.org/maperc)), and (2) the Sunshine ERC at the University of South Florida (USF) ([health.usf.edu/publichealth/erc](http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/erc)). The OHP program at the MAP ERC is operated through the Department of Psychology, Colorado State University (CSU). The OHP program at the Sunshine ERC is operated through USF's Department of Psychology. Both the MAP and Sun-

shine ERCs can serve as models. Both OHP programs, funded by NIOSH, provide specialized training to psychology students including those in industrial/organizational psychology (CSU and USF) and other sub-disciplines of psychology (CSU). Of particular interest to OHP students and new faculty is that ERCs run Pilot Grant Programs that provide small grants for health and safety related research.

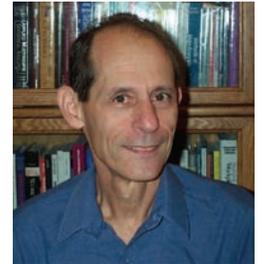
Both OHP programs began as a concentration in 2002 with the awarding of an American Psychological Association/NIOSH small training grant, and both evolved in a unique way during the ensuing years. The OHP program at CSU is directed by three faculty members from two departments who specialize in industrial-organizational psychology (Peter Chen, Department of Psychology), epidemiology (Lorann Stallones, Department of Psychology), and ergonomics (John Rosecrance, Department of Environmental and Radiological Health Sciences). Peter Chen and John Rosecrance also serve as members of the MAP ERC executive committee. Core courses of the OHP program include occupational health psychology, principles of ergonomics, epidemiology of occupational illness and injury, measurement, human performance, social psychology, and research methods. Beyond course work, OHP students work on a variety of research projects funded by NIOSH, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Projects concern safety management, knowledge utilization and dissemination, agricultural safety and sleep deficits, workplace violence, suicide prevention, training and selection for safety, and development of an assessment center for construction management. Students are supported through internal university funds, research assistantships sustained by grant-funded projects, and external placements. For example, one doctoral student received the 2005 American Society of Safety Engineers Foundation/Liberty Mutual Safety Research Institute Fellowship to study chief financial officer perceptions of safety programs and practices. Another doctoral student received a CDC pilot grant to study workplace injuries of unionized workers.

The OHP program at USF is directed by Paul Spector and Tammy Allen from the Department of Psychology. They also serve as members of the Sunshine

ERC executive committee. The program offers interdisciplinary OHP training to I/O students from the Psychology Department. OHP students take required I/O coursework in psychology, in addition to a survey course on OHP and a seminar on work-family issues. A four-course minor is taken in the College of Public Health that includes coursework in epidemiology/biostatistics and occupational health and safety. Additional training opportunities include involvement in interdisciplinary research, lecturing in public health classes, and attending conferences in fields outside of psychology. Students across all the ERC graduate programs participate in ERC poster events, and they have an ERC student association. Students are supported by NIOSH-funded traineeships, research assistantships, graduate teaching assistantships, fellowships, and external paid internships.

Students in both OHP programs receive experience working in interdisciplinary environments that will position them well to work as consultants, faculty members, and researchers. This background can also enable them to function well in work settings that are not normally the domain of psychologists, such as medical schools and schools of public health. At the same time, involvement of psychologists with ERCs provides opportunities for psychology to have a positive influence on health-related fields that are recognizing how important behavior is to health and safety. The involvement of OHP faculty and students from psychology expands opportunities for students in other ERC programs, and spurs them to take psychology courses in OHP-related areas and to collaborate on research projects.

OHP faculty and students at universities other than CSU and USF may benefit by making connections with the closest ERC, particularly if there is one nearby. Practitioners may benefit as well if their work is relevant to occupational health and safety. The scope of each ERC is not limited to its own university and immediate community, making ERCs available to faculty and graduate students from various institutions. Making connections with the closest ERC could result in any or all of the opportunities available at CSU and USF. One possible way to make a connection with an ERC could be to offer... (continued on page 4)



Paul Spector

University of South Florida



Peter Chen

Past President of SOHP  
Colorado State University

**"...involvement of psychologists with ERCs provides opportunities for psychology to have a positive influence on health-related fields that are recognizing how important behavior is to health and safety."**



## NIOSH-Funded Education and Research Centers (cont'd)

an OHP talk, either as a colloquium or to a graduate class. Our experience is that health and safety faculty and professionals outside of psychology are quite interested in the things psychologists

do, and are very open to interdisciplinary collaboration.

Our newly emerging field of OHP is relevant to ERCs, and there is much

that we can do to help one another. The OHP field, as well as SOHP, will benefit from eventually having more links to OHP within all 17 ERCs.

### Addendum

#### Additional Examples of OHP-ERC Cooperation

Compiled by Paul Landsbergis  
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Bowling Green State University's OHP program has an established collaboration with the ERC consortium based at the University of Cincinnati. It is a productive partnership (they funded my dissertation). As far as I know, BGSU is the only I/O program in the consortium. I believe that more needs to be done about establishing cross-disciplinary collaborations in OHP.

Olga Clark  
Assistant Professor  
University of Hartford

Bowling Green State University OHP students participate in the Cincinnati ERC's pilot grant program. Several studies have been conducted over the past three years using this mechanism. However, I think there is still a need to develop greater collaborative efforts with faculty from the other disciplines.

Jennifer L. Burnfield  
Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO)  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1591  
[jburnfield@humrro.org](mailto:jburnfield@humrro.org)

As a student funded by a NIOSH traineeship at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, there is very little focus on OHP. The injury epidemiology program in Environmental Health Sciences, in part developed by Dr. Susan Gerberich and Dr. Bruce Alexander, requires a vocational and occupational psychology course. However, that is the only such course, and I am not sure that other Schools of Public Health with NIOSH traineeships require any OHP courses. We need to encourage greater inclusion of OHP.

Evette Pinder  
University of Minnesota  
Environmental Health Sciences  
[evettepinder@MSN.COM](mailto:evettepinder@MSN.COM)

We have an informal relationship with the Harvard ERC. I am on the advisory board of that ERC, but not in my capacity as a member of the OHP program at Storrs. I believe that the fit is natural but the relationship should receive more attention.

Nicholas Warren  
Associate Professor of Medicine/Ergonomics Coordinator  
University of Connecticut Health Center  
[warren@nso.uchc.edu](mailto:warren@nso.uchc.edu)

There is a need for a link between OHP programs and ERCs. We have a little communication with the University of Washington ERC; however, I would not describe our relationship as one of formal connection. I believe that establishing a formal connection is important; it takes effort by both parties.

Leslie B. Hammer  
Professor of Psychology  
Portland State University  
[hammerl@pdx.edu](mailto:hammerl@pdx.edu)

Drs. Judith Siegel, Rena Repetti, and Peter Schnall developed a course entitled "Work and Health" that is taught at the School of Public Health at UCLA. The course is intended to be the first in a series on the role of work organization and psychosocial factors in the development of cardiovascular disease, psychological disorders, musculoskeletal disorders, and injuries at work. Through a practicum, the course provides students with hands-on skills pertaining to worksite assessment to identify the presence of work-organization risk factors. The course is part of the Southern California Centers for Occupational and Environmental Health's initiative on psychosocial factors in the work environment; the initiative is entitled STEP (for surveillance, training and early prevention). Please see <http://www.workhealth.org/projects/uci%20step%20summary.html>.

Peter Schnall  
Clinical Professor of Medicine  
University of California at Irvine



Paul Landsbergis  
Mount Sinai School of  
Medicine



## I-O Psychologists in Conference: A Focus on Health at SIOP 2008

**Carrie A. Bulger**  
Quinnipiac University

**Peter Chen**  
President of SOHP  
Department of Psychology  
Colorado State University

Industrial and organizational (IO) psychologists have long studied work in terms of performance and attitudes toward jobs and organizations. Further, IO psychologists, in their professional roles, often encounter concerns over the quality of work life. In his presidential address to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) in 1988, Daniel Ilgen reminded IO psychologists that individual health and occupational health are timeless concerns for obvious humanitarian and utilitarian reasons. Given this background of concern, IO psychologists, many of whom are also members of SOHP, have begun to broaden the field's perspective on well-being by examining ways to optimize both individual and organizational health. As part of the SIOP conference format for 2008, SIOP president and SOHP member Lois Tetrick organized a committee to develop conference programming related to individual and organizational health. The committee established a Thursday program concerning these topics. The program will feature six sessions that focus on cutting-edge research and practice aimed at optimizing well-being for organizations and employees. The 2008 SIOP conference will be held in San Francisco from Thursday, April 10 to Saturday, April 12. All six individual-and-organizational-health sessions will be held on Thursday. A brief summary of each session in the Thursday program follows.

### I. Individual-Organizational Health.

Drs. Daniel C. Ganster and James C. Quick will set the stage for the remainder of the day in their keynote

speeches. They will address how we have failed in individual health research and what we must do to make a difference in the lives of workers. Then they will examine four advances (positive health, leadership, mood, emotions, and interventions/prevention) that can help improve individual and organizational health.

### II. Individual-Organizational Health: Consequences of Mergers, Acquisitions, and Downsizing.

Dr. Wayne F. Cascio will address the effects of mergers, acquisitions, and layoffs on the health and well-being of individuals and organizations. He will describe how these increasingly common organizational processes operate and how their adverse effects can be minimized.

### III. Individual-Organizational Health: Leading for Health

Both Drs. Joel B. Bennett and E. Kevin Kelloway will (a) consider research that helps to identify best practices leaders may adopt to foster individual and organizational health, (b) describe how consultants can work with organizations to encourage the use of such practices, and (c) pose a number of unanswered questions about leadership and health.

### IV. Individual-Organizational Health: Selecting for Health and Safety

Panelists, Drs. Frank J. Landy, Robert R. Sinclair, Eugene F. Stone-Romero, and a mystery panelist will discuss and/or debate the effectiveness and appropriateness of using traditional selection procedures (e.g., personality assessment) to screen out individuals who are prone to accidents, injuries, and illnesses at work. The panelists will consider this practice from organizational, ethical, legal, and practical perspectives.

### V. Individual-Organizational Health: Integrating Health into Work-Nonwork Research and Practice

Panelists from different backgrounds including Drs. Tammy Allen, Jeffrey H. Greenhaus, Christine Dickson, and Phyllis Moen will discuss new and developing applications of, and challenges to, research on the work-nonwork interface. The panelists will also look at practices that underline individual and organizational health-related issues. Finally, the panelists will have a brief opportunity to describe their current research regarding the relation of individuals' work and nonwork lives to individual and organizational health outcomes.

### VI. Individual-Organizational Health: Tale of Academic Practitioner Collaboration in Occupational Safety

At the end of the program, Dr. David A. Hofmann will describe the collaborative relationship between a safety-oriented consulting firm and himself. The presentation will highlight how the relationship came about and several collaborative projects (e.g., the development of assessment tools, the implementation of training interventions). The presentation will conclude with a view of what each party has gained from the relationship.

The committee responsible for organizing this event includes: Peter Y. Chen (Committee Chair), Carrie A. Bulger, Christopher J. L. Cunningham, Leslie B. Hammer, John Kello, Autumn K. Krauss, and Paul E. Spector. Julie Sampson assisted in compiling all the meeting minutes and email exchanges, and coordinating conference calls. Most of the committee members will serve as moderators throughout the day.



Carrie Bulger  
Quinnipiac University

"...in 1988, Daniel Ilgen reminded IO psychologists that individual health and occupational health are timeless concerns for obvious humanitarian and utilitarian reasons."

## OHP Interventions: Wellness Programs

Leigh Schmitt

Austin Peay State University

*In the previous SOHP Newsletter, I described successful comprehensive workplace wellness programs offered by Rosenberg Products Company and Beacon Mutual Insurance Company. However, some organizations may not be able to support such comprehensive efforts. This article describes a few smaller-scale, lower-cost wellness incentives that offer health benefits.*

### Organizations Wary of Program Investment with Uncertain Success

While organizations such as the Rosenberg Products Company and the Beacon Mutual Insurance Company of Rhode Island have invested in wellness programs that succeed in improving worker well-being and reducing health care costs (see <http://sohp.psy.uconn.edu/SOHPNewsletter11.pdf#Wellness>), other organizations have been reluctant to embrace employer-sponsored wellness programs. Some program managers worry that worksite-wellness program funding may be on the decline amidst a tough business climate spurred by global competition.

Lisa Lewis, my colleague at Austin Peay State University, has served as health educator for an HMO sponsored by Vanderbilt University Medical Center and other organizations. She suggests that the lack of immediate return on investment may discourage top management from choosing worksite wellness programs, given competing organizational needs. Since it may take 5 years to see health cost savings, according to Lewis, companies may be reluctant to invest in wellness programs.

Lewis also reports that organizations that sponsor programs may become disappointed in low employee participation rates. In many cases, she has seen organizations make the mistake of investing large sums in equipment and facilities, but refusing to spend on adequately trained staff to sustain the programs. Lewis says, "If an organization is planning to invest money in a wellness program, the top priority for investment should be professional staff to manage the program. Skilled trainers lure participants into the wellness programs and then motivate them to adhere to their program plans and reach health goals." Moreover, having trainers supervise workouts and teach gym novices how to use equipment properly can reduce injuries.

In contrast to the notion of the importance of professional staff, Lewis has heard comments from managers who believe that "Work out at your own risk" liability disclaimer placards, akin to "Swim at Your Own Risk—No Lifeguard on Duty" signs commonly posted at hotel pools, in lieu of professional trainers, reduces the liability for injuries suffered at worksite fitness centers. However, a basic review of case law suggests that specific, carefully worded liability waivers are a more prudent course of action to void personal injury lawsuits compared to not hiring professional trainers and avoiding the higher legal duty for care that could be linked to their presence (*Benedek v. PLC Santa Monica, LLC*, 2002). Nonetheless, the benefits of trained staff on site should outweigh the risk of additional responsibility for care (Lisa Lewis, personal communication, November, 2007).

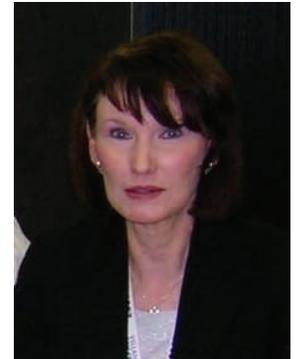
### Smaller-Scale Programs: A possible remedy for uncertainty

Beyond the issue of sunk costs and legal liability concerns of worksite wellness centers is a general lack of consistent empirical evidence regarding the relative benefits of various occupational health interventions (Heaney, 2003). In addition, the available evidence of individual program successes cannot be generalized across organizations with a high degree of reliability. A successful program in one organization may be a failure in another organization.

For instance, flu shots for adults over age 50 have been touted as a top-rated worksite health intervention with respect to return on investment by the United States-based National Commission on Prevention Priorities (<http://www.prevent.org/content/view/129/72/>). Yet, some older reports found that broad immunization campaigns that provide flu shots to healthy individuals did not produce net savings (Bridges, et al., 2001; Derango & Franzini, 2003; Warner, 1988).

As the young field of occupational health psychology matures, more sophisticated program evaluation studies should resolve these different findings and should serve as a guide for the development of successful worksite health promotion programs. In the meantime, organizations may choose to pursue smaller-scale investments in wellness programs prior to launching expensive, complete fitness centers, and associated programs. The National Commission on Prevention Priorities report entitled "Preventive Care: A National Profile on Use, Disparities, and Health Benefits (<http://www.prevent.org/content/view/129/72/>) may serve as a starting point for selecting smaller-investment wellness components from the medical domain. Cost-effective worksite wellness components highlighted in this report include:

- Promotion of daily aspirin use for adults at-risk for developing coronary heart disease
- Smoking cessation programs
- Alcohol abuse screening and counseling



Leigh Schmitt  
Austin Peay State  
University

**"A successful program in one organization may be a failure in another organization."**



## OHP Interventions: Wellness Programs (cont'd)

Other relatively inexpensive program components that may be considered include group walking programs, education regarding efficient use of health care services, and given the current media frenzy surrounding MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), a hand-washing promotion program. A program as simple as a hand hygiene promotion campaign may significantly reduce illness-related absenteeism. One experimental program set up at a college dormitory simply presented a message campaign to promote hand washing among students and provided hand sanitizer gel to the students. After a period of a few months, there were 40% fewer sickness-related absences reported in the subjects who were exposed to the experimental hand hygiene program (White, Kolble, Carlson, & Lipson, 2005). Recent media attention to MRSA infection could add to the desirability of a simple hand hygiene campaign as a starting point for worksite wellness.

An inexpensive alternative to a worksite gym is a structured walking program. The Marshfield Clinic, a large medical group practice, set up a walking program consisting of a number of components: a fitness assessment prior to the walking program component, single-mile walk test, a point-based incentive system for earning prizes for goal achievement, bi-weekly health advice delivered through e-mail messages, plus a program evaluation based on participant comments and biometric success measures (Chyou, Scheur, & Linneman, 2006). The program produced significant improvements in BMI (body mass index) among the female program participants. While this program was directed by three full-time staff members along with a few interns and volunteers, full-scale gym facilities are likely unnecessary for delivering a successful walking program.

Another simple means to reducing health care costs is to educate employees about efficient utilization of health care services. Considering the high cost of emergency room services, providing employees with information about area walk-in clinics, including information about the types of medical needs that can be handled at these less costly facilities can have obvious cost savings (Lisa Lewis, personal communication, 2007).

Educating employees about the importance of compliance with medical advice and taking prescription medication according to physicians' orders can also be cost effective. In fact, Caesars Entertainment, Inc. is so committed to the goal of proper medical compliance that they provide an on-site pharmacy that provides 250 prescription medications at no cost to employees along with convenient access to a pharmacist (Fine, 2005).

**"A program as simple as a hand hygiene promotion campaign may significantly reduce illness-related absenteeism."**

### Conclusion

In summary, occupational health psychologists who wish to guide organizations in the development of worksite health promotion programs may face resistance in the form of cost-benefit concerns. Conducting a needs-assessment to understand the unique health needs of the client organization along with an initial small-scale program may provide a path to a successful employee health intervention. Studies such as the National Commission on Prevention Priorities report should also assist in the development of successful wellness programs.

### References

- Benedek V. Craig; B157016; Super. Ct. No. SC063017: (2007).
- Chyou, P.-H., Scheur, D., & Linneman, J. G. (2006). Assessment of female participation in an employee 20-week walking incentive program at Marshfield Clinic, a large multispecialty group practice. *Clinical Medicine & research, 4*, 256-265.
- DeRango, K. & Franzini, L. (2003). Economic evaluations of workplace health interventions: Theory and literature review. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (pp. 417-430). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Fine, A. (2005). A different approach to wellness programs. *Managed Care Quarterly review, 13*, 24.
- Haines, D. J., Davis, L., Rancour, P., Robinson, M., Neel-Wilson, T., & Wagner, S. (2007). A pilot intervention to promote walking and wellness and to improve the health of college faculty and staff. *Journal of American College Health, 55*, 219-225.
- Heaney, C. A. (2003). Worksite health interventions: Targets for change and strategies for attaining them. In J. C. Quick & L. E. Tetrick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational health psychology* (pp. 305-324). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Partnership for prevention. (2007). Preventive care: A national profile on use, disparities, and health benefits. Retrieved December, 2007 from <http://www.prevent.org/content/view/full/129/72/>.
- Thompson, S. E., Smith, B. A., & Bybee, R. (2005). Factors influencing participation in worksite wellness programs among minority and underserved populations. *Family Community Health, 28*, 267-273.

## Reviewing at the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*



**Lois Tetrick**  
Editor  
George Mason  
University

There are two things that make a journal outstanding: the quality of the manuscripts submitted and the quality of the reviewers' feedback to authors. Most of us understand the value of well-designed studies that make a significant and unique contribution to the field; however, we may not realize the contribution of the reviewers' constructive comments that often substantially improve manuscripts. Therefore, I'd like to use this column to reflect on the role of reviewers in the publication process from the perspective of the Editor of the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology (JOHP)*.

Before I start, I would like to express my appreciation to all of the reviewers who have contributed to *JOHP* over the years. Reviewing is a professional service for which the rewards are few. Obviously, it does allow a reviewer to read the results of the latest studies and I have always found reviewing to have intrinsic rewards. However, reviewing is an activity that is not generally rewarded by our organizations be they academe, government, or industry. Reviewing is something that we "give back" to the profession. *JOHP* would not be where it is without the efforts, expertise, and professionalism of the cadre of reviewers who have served it so well over the years.

Now let me comment on what makes an excellent review, at least from my perspective; I hope what I have to say rings true for you as either a reviewer or as an author. I will organize my comments around four general principles: 1. Reviews should be developmental; 2. Reviews should comment on the substantive contributions of the manuscript; 3. Reviews should assess the methodological rigor of the study; and 4. Reviews should provide suggestions to improve the communication and writing style.

### Developmental

Top reviewers, from my vantage point, are developmental. All of us can improve and the receipt of constructive feedback is one process by

which we can improve our research and the communication of our research. Also, we like to have the quality of our work recognized. Therefore developmental feedback includes comments on both the strengths and weaknesses of manuscripts.

A developmental review is one of tone as much as substance. Authors should always be treated with respect and reviewers should consider their role to be to offer suggestions for improvements without expressing judgment or evaluation to the author--reviewers' evaluations and recommendations as to the disposition of a manuscript should be made to the editor, not the authors.

Constructive feedback identifies an apparent weakness and then offers suggestions as to how the weakness may be addressed. Sometimes there are "fatal flaws," at least in the eyes of a single reviewer. These should be pointed out and, where feasible, suggestions offered as to improvements in theoretical rationale, logic, design, or analysis that might address the flaws--if only in future research.

### Contribution - Substantive or Methodological

People are typically asked to review a manuscript because they have expertise in at least one of the topical areas considered in a manuscript, although sometimes individuals may be asked to review a manuscript to provide primarily methodological or statistical expertise. Therefore, one of the major principles in writing a review is to comment on the "big picture". Does this manuscript make a contribution to the field? Authors should explicitly describe the contribution the manuscript makes. The contribution could be to theory, to practice, to both theory and practice, or to methodology, measurement, and statistics. Reviewers are a sounding board as to whether they agree with the authors' statements regarding the manuscript's contribution or have a different opinion. Hopefully, any difference in opinion can be supported by published literature.

Excellent reviews point out important literature that has been overlooked by authors, including specific citations as appropriate. Certainly, no one expects reviewers to complete the literature review for authors, but sometimes this is an excellent way for reviewers to make their concerns

clearer.

### Methodological Rigor

Excellent reviews also provide comments on the soundness of the research design given the purpose of the study and the analytical approach taken. I believe that many of us feel more comfortable commenting on this aspect of manuscripts as we have the illusion that this is more concrete. I, however, disagree. Just as there are multiple means to an end, there also are multiple approaches for conducting research to address our research questions. Reviewers should feel free to suggest alternative approaches, especially when it comes to statistical analyses, but following the principle of developmental feedback, the reviewer should provide a rationale as to why the alternative approach might improve the manuscript. Many years ago when structural equation modeling was just beginning to appear in the psychological literature, I was challenged by Bob Guion, Emeritus Professor of IO Psychology, to publish something with a single *t*-test. To date, I haven't even come close, but I'm still striving toward that goal!

### Communication Style

*JOHP* receives manuscripts from authors around the world and from multiple disciplines. Because *JOHP* is an American Psychological Association (APA) journal we adhere to the style requirements spelled out in the *APA Publication Manual*. One of the purposes of the *APA Publication Manual* is to standardize the way we report the rationale, methods, and findings of our research to facilitate communication. APA's is certainly not the only style but it is the one that *JOHP* has adopted.

Considering the fact that occupational health psychology professes to be an interdisciplinary field, it is desirable that authors from multiple disciplines feel welcome to submit their manuscripts and receive constructive feedback that enhances the communication of their research findings. Reviewers play a pivotal role in this. I do not expect reviewers to be copyeditors, although I am certainly not distressed when reviewers provide detailed feedback on grammar and writing style and I would hope that authors also would appreciate of this detailed feedback. However, it is extremely helpful for reviewers to suggest areas where a manuscript may... (continued on page 9)



"...the receipt of constructive feedback is one process by which we can improve our research and the communication of our research."



## Reviewing at the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* (cont'd)

not be clear or where an alternative organization might better communicate the rationale underlying the study, the methods used in the study, or the findings of the study. From time to time we all fall prey to our own disciplinary jargon despite our best intentions. Reviewing that helps writers communicate clearly constitutes one of the strengths of the peer review system.

### The Review Process at JOHP

Having outlined four principles of good reviews, it is fitting to briefly describe how the review process works at *JOHP*. Because this description is rather typical, at least for APA journals, I will be brief.

Once manuscripts are submitted using the electronic portal at [www.apa.org/journals/ocp/submission.html](http://www.apa.org/journals/ocp/submission.html) I assign reviewers. We have a database of reviewers that includes their areas of expertise and a history of the manuscripts they have reviewed. This history helps me avoid asking someone to review more than one manuscript at a time. Despite this tool, sometimes a reviewer may receive a request to review a manuscript when he or she is currently reviewing another manuscript either because of unique expertise or because the new manuscript is a revision of a manuscript that he or she has previously reviewed.

*JOHP* tries to provide authors feedback within 60 days of the day their manuscripts are received. Therefore, we ask reviewers to submit their reviews within four weeks. If circumstances are such that the reviewer cannot meet the deadline, then it is important to let the editor know so either the review due date can be adjusted or another reviewer asked to review the manuscript.

Each manuscript is assigned three reviewers. Sometimes, I will assign a 4<sup>th</sup> reviewer who is usually someone who has not reviewed for *JOHP* before. Because reviewers are not able to review a manuscript either because of other commitments or because they do not feel comfortable reviewing a specific manuscript, any particular manuscript may only receive comments from two reviewers.

Once the reviewers' comments have been received, the action editor considers the reviewers' comments and the recommendations that the reviewers make to the editor. The action editor then writes the decision letter based on an independent reading of the manuscript and the reviewers' recommendations. Reviewers do not always agree although "near agreement" is the norm not the exception. More frequently, reviewers identify some different strengths and weaknesses depending on their own areas of exper-

tise; and while I typically do not provide specific feedback to reviewers, all reviewers receive copies of the decision letter and all of the reviewers' comments, which should provide some basis for comparison of their own review relative to their colleagues.

### Invitation

Now that I have described the principles and process of scientific reviewing at *JOHP*, I would like to extend the opportunity to you to get involved, if you aren't already. *JOHP* includes reviewers from around the globe and across relevant OHP disciplines. The only condition required of a reviewer is that the individual should have completed his or her graduate studies although there is some discussion at APA regarding the future modification of this restriction.

I can't promise rewards other than recognition of reviewers' contributions by listing in each October issue everyone who has reviewed for *JOHP*. If you are interested in reviewing for *JOHP*, please send an email to [JOHP@gmu.edu](mailto:JOHP@gmu.edu) and indicate that you would like to become a reviewer for the journal. We will send you the reviewer expertise checklist to complete and return so that we can include you in our reviewer database.

"...it is desirable that authors from multiple disciplines feel welcome to submit their manuscripts and receive constructive feedback that enhances the communication of their research findings."

**Thank you to all of the reviewers and authors who have contributed to the success of *JOHP*!**

## Education and Training Committee

**Carrie A. Bulger**

**Quinnipiac University**

As noted in the inaugural issue of the SOHP newsletter, one of the challenges faced by the Education and Training Committee concerns defining what we mean by education and training and, in so doing, establishing a set of standard definitions. SOHP and the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EA-OHP) are cooperating in this effort. Carrie A. Bulger, chair of the Education and Training Committee for SOHP, Stavroula Leka, chair of the Education Forum for EA-OHP, and Jonathan Houdmont, Executive Officer of EA-OHP, will host a round table discus-

sion entitled "Educate the Educators: A Round Table Discussion of OHP Education" at the upcoming Work, Stress, & Health conference (March 6-8, 2008). The goals of the session are to share information about educational offerings, to identify the types of information still needed, to identify areas of educational collaboration on an international level, and to discuss the development of a core OHP curriculum. Please plan to attend this session in Washington, DC. In case you will be unable to attend the event, this round table discussion will also be held at the conference of the EA-OHP in Valencia, Spain (November 12-14, 2008).

Along with the round table discussion, we will be requesting participation of conference attendees at both conferences in a survey, the purpose of which is to gather additional information about OHP Education and Training. Surveys will be available at the conference registration desk, or from one of the above-named people. Instructions for returning the completed surveys will be noted on the survey itself. Results of the survey and the round table discussions will be disseminated in the SOHP and EA-OHP newsletters.



## Looking at OHP from a Health Psychology Perspective

James McCubbin  
Clemson University



Health psychology has much to offer to the developing field of OHP. As a SOHP member trained in health psychology, I was asked to share my views of theories, models and methods that are common in health psychology and especially relevant to OHP. Here is my Top Ten list of health psychology principles of interest to occupational health psychologists:

1. Mind and body are intimately related. Therefore, a comprehensive view of health should consider the integration of mind and body, and focus on both physical and mental health.
2. Health is much more than the absence of disease. Health is a complete state of physical, mental and social well-being... (WHO, 1948). Medical models tend to conceptualize disease as primarily caused by physical pathogens to be treated by medicine that targets those pathogens (Engel, 1977). These acute disease-based models were especially informative a hundred years ago when the top killers were infectious diseases, including influenza, pneumonia and tuberculosis. In recent years, other models have emerged with a primary focus on maintenance of health (see below).
3. The Bio-Psycho-Social Model argues that health is a consequence of interactions between biological, psychological and social factors. In most developed countries, the current top killers are coronary heart disease, cancer, stroke and pulmonary diseases. We now recognize the important role of lifestyle and environmental influence in the etiology and prevention of these chronic diseases. Appreciation of this model facilitates understanding of the complex problems confronting occupational health psychologists.
4. The comprehensive study of health requires interdisciplinary teams to address problems at multiple levels. Important levels of analysis include society, organization, community, family, individual, organ system, cell and gene.
5. Important research techniques include quantitative, qualitative, correlational and experimental methodologies. "Triangulation" with converging methodologies can strengthen our scientific testing of health-related hypotheses.
6. Stress spills over. Stress at home spills into work and vice versa. One cannot look at one aspect of the environment in isolation.
7. The relationship between stress and health is complex. Health issues can cause psychological stress, and psychological stress can impair health, both physical and mental (*and yes, this does sound like a positive feedback loop*). Health and performance are also closely related. Stress affects the ability of workers to perform optimally and, therefore, to maximize compensation, opportunities for advancement, and job satisfaction. Cognitive performance is especially pertinent to worker well-being in technical, knowledge-based economies.
8. Adherence to health-related recommendations is necessary for the maintenance of health. For health recommendations to be effective, organizations and individual workers must follow those recommendations. These recommendations generally take the form of increasing health-enhancing behaviors and decreasing health-damaging behaviors.
9. Health is linked to socioeconomic conditions. One cannot address issues of one without consideration of the other. It works both ways... poor health can degrade socioeconomic resources, and lack of socioeconomic resources can degrade health (*and yes, this does sound like another positive feedback loop*).
10. Prevention is cost effective. Economic pressures related to disease-treatment models of health, technology-intensive diagnostics, and "billable procedures" can be mitigated by an emphasis on prevention and health maintenance.

OHP in its broadest context is an interdisciplinary amalgam of theories and methods from multiple specialties both inside and outside the broader discipline of psychology. Our science is informed by occupational health and safety, public health, industrial engineering, preventive medicine and behavioral medicine, among others. From within the traditional psychological sciences, OHP derives energy from industrial-organizational and human factors psychology, from clinical and community psychology, and from cognitive and health psychology.

Occupational health psychology must recognize and draw from its parent and allied disciplines, and build multidisciplinary partnerships with specialists from a variety of backgrounds. The challenges of occupational health psychology are complex, and we must consolidate diverse resources for our field to mature and contribute.

### References

- World Health Organization (1948). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. Geneva, Switzerland.
- Engel, G. L. (1977). The need for a new medical model: A challenge for biomedicine. *Science*, 196, 129-136.

*James A. McCubbin is a health psychophysicologist and a founding member of SOHP. He has spent most of his career in medical settings including Duke Medical Center and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He served as chair of the Behavioral Medicine review group at NIH and is currently Senior Associate Dean of the College of Business and Behavioral Science at Clemson University.*



James McCubbin  
Clemson University

**"Health is much more than the absence of disease."**

## Looking Toward the Future of SOHP

**Bob Sinclair**

**Portland State University**

Greetings! As your incoming president, I see this column as an opportunity to let you know what's on my mind as I get ready to take office in January. During one weekend in October, I attended the program planning session for the upcoming Work, Stress, and Health conference. The session involved an extensive day and a half of work with several NIOSH staff members, representatives of APA, and members of SOHP. At the end of the session, we left feeling proud that we have a high-quality, exciting, and diverse program for our March 2008 meeting.

Participating in the conference planning process was interesting for several reasons. First, it was held at the NIOSH office in Cincinnati. As most of you know, our colleagues who work there now and who have worked there in the past have been leaders in creating and defining the field of OHP. They have produced a steady stream of important OHP scholarship. I appreciated the chance to make a pilgrimage of sorts to see the place first hand. Second, my visit provided me with an opportunity to meet several people with whom I had been collaborating by e-mail or conference call over the course of several months. For the last few months our conference planning committee has been hard at work planning the 2008 conference through numerous conference calls and e-mail exchanges about a wide array of issues. As a result of our October meeting I enjoyed being able

to match familiar names with what are now familiar faces. Third, for me at least, it was my first chance to go "behind the scenes" in constructing the program for a large scientific conference. It was rewarding to see how much time, effort, and care goes into planning the program. Although I certainly had a feeling for the process before, that weekend in Cincinnati drove home for me how many people make critical contributions to creating this conference.

In the years to come, SOHP will be an increasingly active partner with APA and NIOSH in planning the Work, Stress, and Health conferences. This collaboration creates both opportunities and responsibilities for SOHP. With regard to opportunities, our collaboration is a vital outlet for the state-of-the-science research produced by our members. Those of you who attend the conference regularly know how wonderful it is to participate in a conference attended by people from many different disciplines and parts of the world who all share an interest in employee safety, health, and well-being.

With regard to our responsibilities, SOHP's growing role in the Work, Stress, and Health conference will require more from our memberships in the years to come. Over time, we will play an increasingly active role in choosing conference themes, reviewing papers, planning the program, designing workshops and other special events, and even searching for support for the conference. With that in mind, we decided to create a new SOHP leadership

position: SOHP conference chair. Emily Huang, a research scientist at Liberty Mutual, has graciously agreed to serve in that role for the 2009 conference (which will be held at an exciting location, to be announced very soon). The nature and scope of this position will no doubt change over time as we learn from our experiences. We are tremendously grateful that Emily agreed to take on this new role. I am confident that Emily will be asking for your assistance at some point and I want to strongly encourage you to help out in any way that you can.

Finally, I wrote in my last column about four internal goals of the organization: refining our structure, growing our member benefits package, continuing to support OHP education, and forming a coherent growth and outreach strategy. In the last several months we have made solid progress on all of these goals--sometimes slower than we anticipated, but certainly steady progress. For example, we have developed new member benefits that we will be sharing with you soon. I appreciate your patience with us as we take more steps toward standardizing our internal processes. By the time this newsletter goes out, you should have received a revised constitution, a call for nominations for new officers, and perhaps shortly after that, an actual election ballot for new officers. Please vote and I will be looking forward to introducing the new officers to you at our conference in March! See you in D.C.!



**Bob Sinclair**

**President of SOHP**  
**Portland State University**

**"Those of you who attend the conference regularly know how wonderful it is to participate in a conference attended by people from many different disciplines and parts of the world who all share an interest in employee safety, health, and well-being."**

## OHP Career Advice: Lessons from Recent Graduates

**Kizzy M. Parks**

**Consultant, DEOMI—Patrick Air Force Base**

**Kristin Charles**

**Assessment Scientist, Kronos Talent Management Division**

**"I was not prepared for the fact at the time that there are few options for research-based applied jobs, and few if any OHP applied jobs."**

The transition from graduate school to a career can be overwhelming. In the emerging field of occupational health psychology (OHP) there are now several high-quality training programs, and even more graduate programs offering courses and providing research opportunities in OHP-related topics. However, while many students are being trained in OHP, the availability of employment opportunities after graduation can limit career options.

The purpose of this article is to communicate to people interested in OHP how their training in OHP can affect traditional I/O jobs, and what other careers might be available to I/O psychologists with an OHP background. We surveyed four PhD professionals with training in OHP. They work in academia, government, and industry. The purpose of these interviews is to provide advice to current I/O students who have a focus on OHP and who will be searching for jobs in the near future.



**Kizzy Parks,**  
**Associate Editor**  
**Patrick Air Force Base**  
**Cape Canaveral, FL**



## OHP Career Advice: Lessons from Recent Graduates (cont'd)

### The Contributors:

**Jennifer Burnfield** has a Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Bowling Green State University and specialized in OHP. She currently works for the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) as a Senior Scientist.

"I work on multiple research projects of varied types for primarily government clients. On a given day, what I do varies depending upon the nature of the different projects I am working on, my role in the project (e.g., project director, team leader, or team member), and the stage of that project. Most of my work lately involves conducting job analyses, developing assessment centers, and so on."

**Sara DeArmond** earned a PhD from Colorado State University with an OHP specialization and is currently an Assistant Professor of Human Resources Management in the College of Business at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh (UWO).

"My schedule varies based on the day of the week. I teach and hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I prepare for classes and conduct research on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I sporadically attend committee meetings. I have been assigned to do this by the College of Business to become acquainted with the governance structure at UWO."

**Emily Huang** received her PhD in Systems Science/Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Portland State University. During her graduate school career, PSU did not yet have a formal OHP program. However, with the help of her advisor, Emily studied OHP-related topics, specifically work-family balance and conflict, and was exposed to those lines of research. Emily currently works at the Liberty Mutual Institute for Safety as a Research Scientist.

"My job is 100% doing research (propose a research project, collect data, analyze data, write/publish peer-review papers) - there is no typical day on my job."

**Jennifer Tucker** earned a PhD from Portland State University with an OHP minor. She is currently a research psychologist at the United States Army Research Institute (ARI) in Fort Benning, Georgia.

"My work is divided between program evaluation work and applied research. ARI is often asked to assess different training programs and offer recommendations for improvements. Some of my day is spent observing training, interviewing soldiers and leaders, administering surveys, entering and analyzing data, and working with contractors who are military subject matter experts. I am currently working on an applied research project that involves developing performance measures for a leader training course. I also write articles on leadership, performance, and military training."

### The Job Search:

The interviewees were asked a series of questions about their job search and finding their current jobs.

#### *How did you hear about your current job?*

**JB:** I worked at HumRRO before I went to graduate school and let them know when I was going on the market; HumRRO also posted the position on their website and on SIOP's JobNet.

**SD:** I heard about my job through an Academy of Management posting.

**EH:** From a SIOP job posting

**JT:** My friend came across ARI's announcement while searching USA Jobs.

#### *Did your OHP background help you to get your current job?*

**JB:** Yes, but indirectly. The position I applied for was in personnel selection and development at a non-profit R&D organization, so the OHP research I had previously conducted was not directly related to the kind of research that is typically done on the job. However, because I liked OHP, I had been very productive (presenting, conducting, and publishing research), and this let the organization know that I had a strong research background (the core skills were there). In my job talk, I conveyed how my OHP studies were relevant to the type of work they do (e.g., the incivility scale development and validation projects I described had components that were relevant to a traditional I/O job). At the end of my job talk I mentioned non-OHP, I/O research I conducted so that they knew I had experience in other types of research.

**SD:** Yes, it did. My interests in occupational safety were mentioned during the interview several times.

**JT:** The strong research focus that I adopted during graduate school as well as the experience I gained practicing new research methods helped me get my current job. ARI looks for researchers who have a strong research background, can work in a team, and enjoy applied research - all of which fit students with an OHP background.

#### *Discuss the obstacles that you have had to overcome to find a job in your desired concentration area.*

**JB:** Although I had three years of prior work experience in a traditional I/O job before I went to graduate school, I focused so much on OHP research while I was in graduate school that my resume was fairly dense in OHP. I knew I was interested in working in an applied setting. Unfortunately I could not initially find any OHP applied postings. Rather, most of the applied jobs were in selection and were posted by non-research organizations. I seemed too heavy in the OHP area, less experienced in traditional personnel selection, and more of a "researcher" than a "consultant" despite my applied experiences. Someone later shared with me the idea that an academic job or a research-specific applied job would be a better fit.

"...while many students are being trained in OHP; the availability of employment opportunities after graduation can limit career options."



## OHP Career Advice: Lessons from Recent Graduates (cont'd)

**SD:** I don't feel that there were many obstacles that I had to overcome to find a job in my desired concentration.

**EH:** I was not able to find a local job (Portland, OR) at that time, and had to relocate.

**JT:** I had been conducting research with military samples, so the ARI position was a good fit for me. I focus more on soldier performance and training evaluation than OHP now.

*What aspect of OHP was most important to you while finding and getting hired in your job?*

**JB:** Conducting research, working on a research team, presenting at conferences, proposing studies, and developing collaborations with others were all experiences I obtained through my OHP studies. These are basic skills that are important for any applied job.

**EH:** My research and statistical skills

**JT:** Statistics, knowledge and experience using a wide range of quantitative research methods, and a solid understanding of research design.

*Other comments about your job search?*

**JB:** I was not prepared for the fact at the time that there are few options for research-based applied jobs, and few if any OHP applied jobs. I also was not aware of other resources besides SIOP, JobNet, and the Placement Center for finding I/O related jobs or OHP jobs.

**SD:** When I was on the job market there were a number of academic positions that targeted applicants with a background in OHP.

**EH:** It took me about a year to find the current job.

**JT:** The ARI position is the first and last job that I interviewed for since graduate school. I was hired ABD and was able to finish my PhD during my first year on the job.

**"Finding an OHP-related job can be tough, but not impossible."**

### Advice for Current OHP Students

In addition to learning about the job search process, we were also interested in any additional advice or insight these professionals could provide to students.

*What advice can you offer graduate students interested in OHP?*

**JB:** If you are considering an applied I/O job, it is important to do what you are good at and if it is OHP then become involved in OHP research groups, grants, presentations, etc. However, this should *not* be the "only" thing you do. My recommendation is to avoid the tendency to specialize "too much" in OHP. In addition to your OHP interests, it is important to be a well-rounded I/O psychologist and have expertise in other marketable areas that are applicable to "traditional" I/O jobs.

**SD:** I would suggest that OHP students remember that business schools can be viable options for them.

**EH:** Strengthen your research and statistical skills

**JT:** Develop good analytical skills, learn new quantitative methods throughout graduate school, have a good understanding of research design, and gain experience in a broad range of OHP-related topics such as leadership, group dynamics, etc. A solid base in statistics and research methodology will provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be competitive for a wide range of applied and academic jobs.

I think that a mix of OHP-related knowledge and skills combined with I/O knowledge, skills, and abilities – especially a solid foundation in statistics and research design will allow most students to be competitive for both academic and applied research positions.

Finding an OHP-related job can be tough, but not impossible. The four contributors demonstrated how their OHP backgrounds helped land and maintain their current jobs. Remember, with creative thinking and planning you can make it happen.

We also are pleased to announce the launch of a job posting page on the SOHP website beginning this March at the time of the Work, Stress, and Health conference in Washington D.C.



Thank you for reading this issue of the Society for Occupational Health Psychology Newsletter!

Society for Occupational Health Psychology

Volume 2, January 2008

### ABOUT SOHP

For comments on the newsletter or submissions please contact the Editor:

Irvin Sam Schonfeld  
Department of Psychology  
The City College of the City  
University of New York  
North Academic Center  
Convent Avenue at 138th St  
New York, NY 10031  
[ischonfeld@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:ischonfeld@ccny.cuny.edu)

The Society for Occupational Health Psychology is a non-profit organization with the purpose of engaging in activities to instruct the public on subjects useful to the individual and beneficial to the community. These efforts are achieved (1) by obtaining, and disseminating to the public factual data regarding occupational health psychology through the promotion and encouragement of psychological research on significant theoretical and practical questions relating to occupational health and (2) by promoting and encouraging the application of the findings of such psychological research to the problems of the workplace.

---

If you are interested in becoming a member of SOHP please visit our website at <http://www.sohp-online.org/>

---