Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Futures Research Funding Program

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Ministry of Jobs, Skills, Training & Labour
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Occupational Disease & Injury Prevention Unit
WHAT is the Occupational Disease and Injury Prevention Section?

OHS Policy and Program Development Branch

Occupational Disease and Injury Prevention Section
Director: Dr. Lisa Ross-Rodriguez

Informatics
Surveillance
Research
Evaluation
Exploration

Scientific Lead: Dr. Annie Young
Information Session

- Introduce and promote the OHS Futures Research Funding Program
- Provide information about the OHS Futures program and application process
- Develop strong relationships with the research community at the University
- Establish a research network to increase awareness of OHS issues and stimulate OHS research in Alberta
- Liaise and establish connection between the research community and industries, companies and other academic institutions
- Opportunity for Q & A
Occupational Disease Prevention and Research
More workers die worldwide from occupational disease than occupational accidents.

According to a 2011 International Labour Organization report, of all workplace deaths in 2008:

- 86% were caused by occupational disease (2.02 Million)
- 14% were caused by occupational accidents (321,000)


Preventing Occupational Disease

- Research drives prevention
- Identify and addresses knowledge gap
- Identify and understand causes
  - Both single exposure and multi-exposure
  - Cumulative exposure (day, week, career)
  - Contamination exposure
- Discover the best available evidence and tools to assist the OHS branch with policy decision-making and program development
- Implement prevention activities using:
  - Policy tools (exposure limits)
  - Compliance tools (inspections, education)
  - Education tools (comprehensive programs for KT & action)

OHS Futures Research Funding Program
OHS Futures – Research Funding Program

**Aims:**
- To enhance OHS knowledge and capacity through research and collaboration through partnerships
- To fund research that will produce information to drive evidence-informed policy decisions for Alberta’s workplaces

**Opportunities provided by OHS Futures:**
- To work together to identify OHS research trends and priorities relevant to AB workplaces and workers
- To establish connections with researchers and industries in AB, nationally and internationally
- To increase awareness and grow OHS research capacity in AB
- To promote knowledge translation by exploring the research evidence and bringing new concepts to AB workplaces through the development of effective tools and best practices
OHS Futures - Research Funding Program

- 2015 competition is now open and application is available at this link: www.alberta.ca/OHSFutures
  - Online application
  - Application supplement
  - Up to $1 million is available annually to fund accepted applications

- **Timeline**
  - Applications Open – March 27, 2015
  - Applications Close – June 1, 2015
  - Grant Award - October 2015
  - Fund Disbursement – December 2015
OHS Futures – Application & Review

Application:

- Online application
  - summary of the research
  - Non-technical component
  - Alignment of research priorities areas
- Application supplement
  - Technical component
  - Provide details of the research

Research Priorities:

- Level I: Broad OHS Themes
  - Work-Related Surveillance, Data, and Metrics
    - Disease, illness and injury monitoring of the health and/or exposure of worker populations
    - Physician, worker, and employer reporting of work-related injuries, illness, and disease
  - Programs, Initiatives, and Evaluation
    - Prevention programs and initiatives
    - Emerging and/or hazard control technologies
    - Evaluation of OHS activities, initiatives and emerging technologies
OHS Futures – Application & Review

Research Priorities:

- Level II: Specific Hazards, Health Outcomes, Populations, and Impacts
  - Work-related Chemical, Biological and/or Physical Hazards
    - Exposure identification, assessment and methodology
    - Toxic use reduction
  - Work-related Psychological Hazards
    - Psychological impacts
  - Work-related Health Outcomes
    - Cancer
    - Noise-induced hearing loss
  - Interest Populations
    - OHS in small and medium sized enterprises
    - Temporary foreign workers, migrant workers
  - Economic Impact
    - Impact on the healthcare system, public and/or business
OHS Futures – Application & Review

- **External Review**
  - Scientific soundness, budget appropriateness, timelines
  - Important to suggest external reviewers
  - External reviewer database
  - Recommendations to fund, fund with revisions, not to fund

- **Internal Review**
  - Panel of JSTL staff
  - Review applications that passed external review
  - Alignment with priorities areas (emphasis on highlighted priorities) & applications to Alberta workers and employers
  - Recommendations made on a consensus-basis to Senior Management

- **Final approval**
  - Internal review panel makes recommendations to Senior Management
  - Senior Management will make the funding decisions
OHS Futures – Project Data Sharing

- **Benefits of Data Sharing**
  - Promote and accelerate scientific progress
  - Avoid duplication of the research
  - Enable replication and verification of results
  - Increase research visibility and impact
  - Increase research efficiency due to reusability and exposure
  - Enhance collaboration and community-building

- **Data sharing agreement with the Government**
  - de-identified, non-personal, record level data
  - Internal capacity to manage data by Informatics/Surveillance areas

- **Open Data Portal**
  - Public access to data
  - De-identified, record-level data
  - Or aggregate data
2014 OHS Futures Applications

- first launched OHS Futures in 2014
- 21 new applications received for 2014
- 8 new applications and 1 renewal application were funded

- **Keywords that highlight the focus of 2014 OHS Futures applications:**
  - mental health; back pain; occupational respiratory disease
  - occupational interventions; work-related disability
  - older workers; musculoskeletal injury
  - metals; urine metabolites; welding fumes; biomarkers; diesel exhaust
  - health and safety; social work; health promotion; ergonomics;
  - workplace violence; employee well-being
  - engineering control; traffic collisions; commuter model; migrant workers
  - bioaerosol; chemical exposures; dermal assessment
  - fatigue; safety literacy; reflection-based education; cognition
  - workplace reporting; childcare workers victimization; whole body vibration; truck driver fatigue
2014 Competition Results

- **University of Alberta:**
  - Healthy workplaces for helping professions: a framework for addressing psychosocial hazards for child and family service workers, Dr. Thomas Barker
  - Flour exposure, sensitization and respiratory health among Alberta bakers, Dr. Jeremy Beach
  - Occupational injuries in inter-provincial workers in Alberta: A feasibility study with focus on Newfoundland, Dr. Nicola Cherry
  - Metabolomics of welding fume exposure: a novel biomarker approach for monitoring health in welding apprentices, Dr. Paige Lacy
  - WHAT-ME/WHAT-MEN (renewal), Dr. Nicola Cherry
2014 Competition Results

- **NAIT:**
  - A qualitative study of reflection-based safety literacy education, Ms. Jodi Howick

- **University of Calgary:**
  - *Workplace violence in Alberta child welfare*, Dr. David Nicholas

- **University of Lethbridge:**
  - Development and validation of a proactive ergonomic intervention targeting Alberta’s rural and urban childcare operators and workers, Dr. John Doan

- **University of Waterloo:**
  - *Impacts of vibration reduction on back pain and fatigues in truck drivers*, Dr. Philip Bigelow
Opportunities

- OHS Futures Research
  - More formalized funding approach
  - Working to identify OHS research priorities relevant to AB workplaces and workers
  - Establishing connections with researchers in Alberta, nationally and internationally
  - Expand OHS research and better identification of current exposures in the prevention of occupational disease in the future
  - Exploration of research results and new concepts for applicability to AB workplaces
Questions

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