The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health of the Bone and Joint Decade

Promoting musculoskeletal health in the workplace and reducing the impact of musculoskeletal disorders

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Chair, Bone and Joint Decade 2010-20
THE CHALLENGE
The fruit is general health and fitness, activities of daily living, work and economic independence.

Musculoskeletal system is the roots and trunk of the tree.
All require of mobility and/or dexterity at all ages.
Work and Musculoskeletal Health

• Work causes musculoskeletal disorders
  – eg heavy work causes back pain, repetitive work related to upper limb problems

• Musculoskeletal conditions limit work capacity
  – eg osteoarthritis of the hip or knee prevents many people aged over 50 years working

Keep people moving
Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders

Major cause of work loss

Back pain
Shoulder pain
  Capsulitis
  Bursitis
Elbow pain
  Medial epicondylitis
  Lateral epicondylitis
Hand pain
  Tenosynovitis

Most are chronic and only occur after exposure to work based risk factors over a period of time.
Spectrum of Musculoskeletal Conditions

Characterised by pain, physical disability and loss of personal and economic independence

- Joint diseases
  - Osteoarthritis
  - Rheumatoid arthritis
  - Gout
  - Infections
- Systemic connective tissue disorders
- Back pain
- Musculoskeletal pain
- Osteoporosis and low trauma fractures
- Bone infections
- Trauma
- Injuries (occupation, sports) and more
Musculoskeletal conditions are the greatest cause of disability (30.55%), impacting on adults of all ages.
Musculoskeletal Disorders were 38% of work-related diseases in Europe in 2005.

European Occupational Disease Statistics, 2005 Occupational diseases recorded in 12 EU countries.
Health in Europe of working age people

Main work-related health problem in people that work or ever worked (men & women) in EU-25
In 2010 38% DLA claims because of musculoskeletal conditions.

13% of total workforce lost productive time due to a common pain condition.

20% of sickness absence due to a musculoskeletal problem.
Musculoskeletal problems account for greatest loss of working days in UK
Labour Force Survey 2014, ONS
The needs of society

• Economic productivity and independence throughout life
• Extended working lives because of increasing life expectancy
Physical health declines with age

Mean SF-36 physical component scores and mental component scores by age group and occupational grade (Whitehall II respondents)

Chandola T et al. BMJ 2007;334:990
• A quarter of workers in Europe think they would not be able to do the same job at 60+. 16% of workers say they would not want to do the same job at 60.
• In sectors which are physically demanding, fewer workers believe they will be able to do current job when they reach 60. Sectors vary widely.
  – Managers, professional workers, technicians and clerical workers tend to perceive jobs as sustainable.
  – Service, sales, skilled agriculture/fishery, craft, trades workers, plant and machine operators, unskilled all tend to believe will be unable to do existing jobs at 60?
• How can work be organised to improve sustainability of jobs?
WHAT IS NEEDED
What is needed

Healthy active ageing at work despite the challenge of musculoskeletal problems requires

• people to maintain their physical capacity;
• balancing the work capacity of the employee with the workload of their working environment;
• identification and modification of risk factors for MSDs and workloss in the workplace;
• early interventions for people developing MSDs; and
• ways to reintegrate people into the workplace who have a musculoskeletal disorder (work-related) or condition (not work-related);
What is needed

• To make the workplace a healthier environment and balance the needs of the employer with the needs of the employee for them to be productive throughout their (extended) working lives

• This requires a different approach that brings together health promotion and health protection with a focus on being proactive rather than reactive to problems and empowering managers and employees to achieve this
Bring together health promotion, health management and health protection.
THE INITIATIVE
Musculoskeletal Health in the Workplace

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• How do we enable people to have full and productive working lives despite musculoskeletal problems (work related and non-work related).

The Bone and Joint Decade

Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health

brings together medical, scientific and patient organisations to make musculoskeletal health a priority to reduce the growing burden on individuals and society.
The initiative

• to develop a comprehensive programme to support workplaces and individual managers to extend their scope of work on prevention and management to include work- and non work-related musculoskeletal health.

• this will improve health and productivity in the workforce and enable people to have full and productive working lives despite age- and work-related musculoskeletal problems and the expectation of prolonged working lives.
The initiative

Specifically, the programme needs to focus on
• better ways of identifying challenges in the workplace
• making the workplace more amenable and supportive of the employees’ health so as to
  – maintain and enhance musculoskeletal health,
  – prevent workloss due to MSK injury and disease through modification of risk factors, and balancing work capacity of the employee with the workload of the working environment
  – enable early intervention and optimize early reintegration into the workplace for people with musculoskeletal disorders and conditions.
Understanding the challenges: an assessment tool
Assessing the Challenges

- Comprehensive assessment through questionnaires and focus groups to identify challenges and potential solutions
  - Work place, including culture
  - Work
  - Managers
  - Employees
  - Size of the problem
  - Abilities to recognise and deal with musculoskeletal problems and their risks at organisation & individual levels
  - Actions being taken at all levels
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Overcoming the Challenges

Directed at
• Workplace policies
• Work characteristics
• Managers interaction with employees
• Employees ability to self manage

• Develop strategies to promote musculoskeletal health
• Implementation through the training of line managers and employees with emphasis of “helping you help yourself”
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Overcoming the Challenges

Interventions

1. Maintain physical capacity through promoting a bone and joint healthy lifestyle (physical activity, avoiding obesity)

2. Prevent MSDs and workloss associated with them
   - identification and modification of risk factors for MSDs in the workplace
     - ergonomic and psychological interventions
   - balancing work capacity of the employee with the workload of the working environment - work organisation and management attitudes

3. Preventing workloss due to musculoskeletal disorders (work-related) or conditions (not work-related) through access to early interventions & ways to reintegrate people into the workplace
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Balancing work capacity of the employee with the workload of the working environment - work organisation and management attitudes

Needs to make the workplace more amenable and supportive of the employees’ health so as to
– maintain and enhance musculoskeletal health,
– prevent MSK injury and disease through modification of risk factors, and
– enable early intervention and optimize early reintegration into the workplace for people with musculoskeletal disorders and conditions.

A method of achieving this is by educating managers and employees on the challenges and effective evidence-based interventions.
“Train the Managers” Programme

- A Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health project developed in partnership with the Work Foundation
- International Steering Group, including Dame Carol Black
- Being initially developed in South West England but looking for national and international partners

**Aim**

- Identifying the educational needs of managers and employees, developing and delivering a training programme to meet these, with an emphasis of helping people help themselves.
Overcoming the Challenges

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2. Prevent MSDs and workloss associated with them
   - identification and modification of risk factors for MSDs in the workplace - ergonomic and psychological interventions
   - balancing work capacity of the employee with the workload of the working environment - work organisation and management attitudes
3. Preventing workloss due to musculoskeletal disorders (work-related) or conditions (not work-related).
   - access to early interventions
   - ways to reintegrate people into the workplace
Enabling people with a musculoskeletal disorder to work

- Work needs to be a clinical outcome, a therapeutic goal
- A coherent and effective response to the worker’s need for support in continuing to work or returning to work with an ongoing musculoskeletal problem.
- A greater emphasis on a “joined up” approach to the sick worker’s problems is required involving
  - the worker
  - the multidisciplinary clinical team (for example the primary care physician, rheumatologist, orthopaedic surgeon, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, psychologist)
  - occupational health professional, and/or employer advisor
  - the employer
Next Steps

• Gain support from bodies such as Council for Work and Health, Public Health England….
• Bring together experts and employers to steer and participate in the initiative
• Develop and evaluate comprehensive assessment toolkit
• Develop specific advice for employers and employees about how to maintain musculoskeletal health in the workplace and how to avoid unnecessary work loss
• Develop a training programme for line managers and employees
• Evaluate effectiveness and disseminate best practice

• Experts, organisations and employers interested in participating in this initiative should contact Anthony.Woolf@btopenworld.com
“Keep people moving”

The Global Alliance for Musculoskeletal Health of the Bone and Joint Decade brings together professional, scientific and patient organisations working to promote musculoskeletal health and musculoskeletal science worldwide.