2016 Occupational Health Psychology (OHP) Summer Institute

OHP Innovation and Creative Strategies Leading to Total Worker Health
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Organizational Barriers and Novel Solutions to Improving Occupational Health

Abstract: In this presentation, we present common organizational barriers to improving occupational health, current innovations in intervention research, and novel ideas for future research to address organizational challenges using new strategies, data sources and analytic methods. Understanding that Total Worker Health® efforts benefit not only employees, but also organizational performance and financial health in the long term, employers have begun investing more in health and wellness programs in recent years. Yet, barriers to implementing and sustaining comprehensive programs remain. We will discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing such programs using data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Work@Health® program, a training program which teaches employers core principles for building effective workplace health programs. Work@Health® utilizes an innovative train-the-trainer program and online, in-person, and blended employer training models, to empower organizations to improve employee health and wellness. Building on the findings of the Work@Health® program and its sister program, the National Healthy Worksite Program, we will discuss how occupational health research and program implementation may be further enhanced through the use of emerging technologies. Specifically, we discuss how information from connected devices, fitness trackers, social media, and a growing number of online profiles can be accessed and used to better understand employees' experiences. Through the integration of novel data sources and analytic methods, many new possibilities are now available to Occupational Health Psychology (OHP) researchers and practitioners. We conclude this presentation by exploring data collection options available from emerging technologies, their applications in OHP interventions, and the various considerations when producing ethical, rigorous research in this new era of data availability.