



the monitor

keeping industry informed of developments in occupational health and safety



Workshop participants

Safety culture excellence workshop resounding success

The workshop conducted by internationally recognised safety strategist Shawn Galloway of ProAct Safety, Austin, Texas, on 30 November 2011 was an outstanding success as measured by the responses of the diverse audience of 65 safety professionals, advisors and regulators.

Key points throughout the day included:

- redefining safety excellence
- identifying transformational opportunities
- reviewing the better practices of excellence cultures
- identifying strategies and vital questions to self-diagnose
- reviewing the elements of safety culture excellence
- developing strategies to engage employees in discretionary efforts to obtain and sustain excellence

The major benefits for most attendees were the refreshing and innovative approach taken by the workshop leader which stimulated a high level of interaction between the very diverse participating group.

The overall response from registrants when asked whether they would attend future professional development workshops was unanimously 'yes'.

The workshop was heavily subsidised by MARCSTA.

It became apparent during the workshop that there needs to be more opportunities for OHS professionals to meet and exchange ideas and opinions in an open and non-confrontational environment.

The MARCSTA Management Committee are conscious of this need and will consider scheduling another appropriate program in 2012.

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Issue 1

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MARCSTA training packages

As a Registered Training Organisation, MARCSTA delivers occupational safety and health units of competency for the following national training packages:

- Transport and Logistics
- Business Services
- Resources and Infrastructure Industry
- Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework

Applications for recognition of prior learning may be lodged for all training programs.



OHS harmonisation to positively impact business

A survey conducted by workforce management software company ComOps has found that:

- 87% of managers think the new regime will be of benefit to their organisation
- 68% of respondents believe that the harmonisation model will achieve a true harmonisation of WHS laws
- 60% of organisations believe that the law's personal liability provisions will be positive to their business

Interestingly, when asked about the three most critical factors for driving a successful WHS program today:

- 74% said that creating the right **culture** in the company was the most important factor
- 52% indicated that having **management support and participation** was the second most important factor
- 48% said that **deploying tools throughout the entire organisation** to report on hazards and incidents was the third most important factor in their current planning.

Assistant Treasurer Bill Shorten says states should not expect payments from the Commonwealth if they walk away from deals on national reforms.

Source: *SafetySolutions* Nov 2011

NSW adopts harmonisation model

The NSW Work Health and Safety Act (2011) along with accompanying regulations and a number of Codes of Practice came into effect as of 1 January 2012.

The Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002 and the Mine Health and Safety Act 2004 along with their respective regulations will continue to apply to coal and metalliferous NSW mines.

Source: *NSW Mine Safety News*

Queensland proceeding with WHS harmonisation

The Queensland Governor in Council has approved the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 following extensive consultation at both the national and state level.

The new regulations are outcomes based and reflect the national model regulations, with some changes, which will allow them to operate effectively in Queensland.

Details on control measures will be provided in various codes of practice.

Provisions have been included to smooth the transition to the new requirements which will entail some action by business operators in order to comply.

Source: *Workplace Health and Safety Queensland e-Alert* Nov 2011



MARCSTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30 November 2011

At the 14th Annual General Meeting of the Association Joe Maglizza was re-elected as Chairman with Ross Graham filling the Deputy Chair role.

The Management Committee for the ensuing year comprises Allaine Coleman, Terry Condipodero, John Christie, Peter Nicholls and the Association's Secretary, Patrick Gilroy.

In his address to the meeting, the Chairman emphasised the importance of increasing the occupational health content of the Work Health and Safety Induction to reflect the direction of the national harmonising legislation which places greater responsibility on employers to monitor employee's health.

He also referred to the growing international concern over the intractability of the serious and fatal injury incidence and the initiatives being taken by MARCSTA to re-visit professional safety culture excellence as one of the ways in which this problem might be approached.

The outstanding contribution of one of MARCSTA's training providers, Micheal John White, was recognised at the meeting with the presentation of the Catherine Stedman Award for quality training delivery over the past five years.

The award has been presented on only three previous occasions.

R: John White, recipient of the Catherine Stedman Award



WORLD'S LARGEST OFFSHORE SIMULATOR OPENS IN PERTH



The world's largest offshore industry marine simulator training centre was recently opened at Bibra Lake by the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg.

The main features of the centre are the two vessel bridges stacked on top of each other, integrated with an engine room simulator, two able seaman deck simulators, an offshore oil rig crane simulator, an offshore oil rig anchor winch simulator, and an oil rig deck simulator.

The simulators will be available to the offshore and shipping industries and can be used, individually or integrated, for training individuals and vessel crews, to introduce students to the offshore maritime industry and to improve skills of experienced crews.

The introduction of the simulator training centre will provide an increased focus on safe and healthy offshore marine industry operations in Western Australia.

Source: WA Business News Dec 2011

RIO TINTO BOOSTS ITS PLANS FOR DRIVERLESS TRUCKS

Rio Tinto has increased its order from 10 trucks to 150 for use at its Western Australian mines.

The company will receive at least 150 of the driverless trucks over four years from 2012 under a new agreement with Komatsu.

The trucks will be used in the Pilbara iron ore mines and controlled from its operations centre in Perth, some 1500 kilometres away.

The trucks use GPS technology to navigate autonomously around a pre-defined course from loading units to dump locations, including waste dumps, stockpiles and crushers.

Chief executive Tom Albanese says that these technologies are revolutionising the way large-scale mining is done, creating attractive hi-tech jobs and helping to improve safety and environmental performance and reduce carbon emissions.

Source: WA Business News



The Premier visits the Operations Centre of Rio Tinto

Remote control inspector eliminates confined space hazards

A confined spaces inspection robot has been developed by a team of Sydney Harbour Bridge Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) employees to eliminate the need for people to enter confined spaces on RMS's network of bridges including hollow concrete and steel bridge support beams.

The concept is similar to remote control devices used by the US military such as bomb disposal robots and drones.

The invention is a finalist for the NSW WorkCover Safe Work Award, the winner of the RTA Occupational Health and Safety Staff Award and was highly commended in the RTA Staff Awards for Excellence in Innovation.

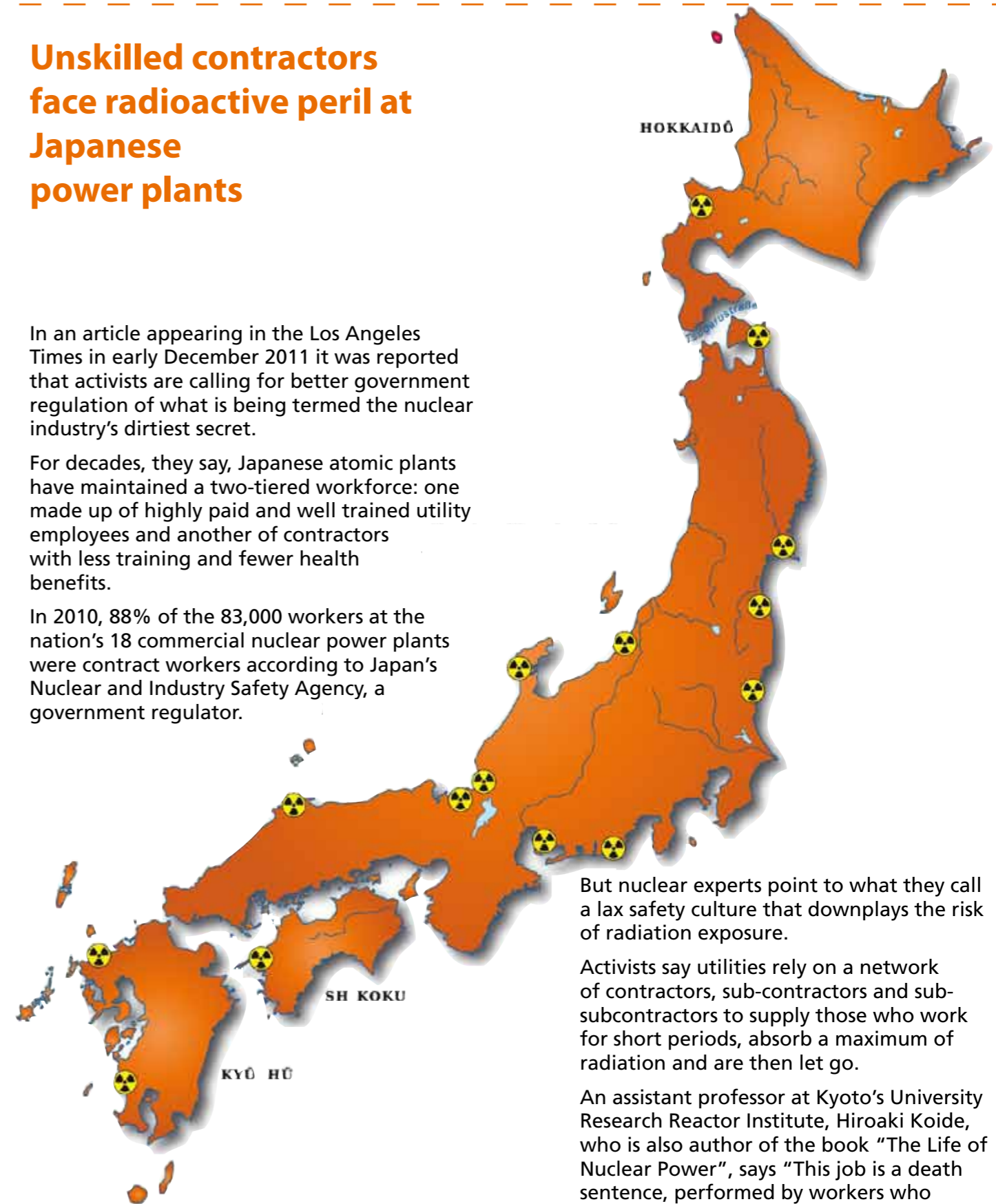
Source: Safety Solutions Nov 2011

Unskilled contractors face radioactive peril at Japanese power plants

In an article appearing in the Los Angeles Times in early December 2011 it was reported that activists are calling for better government regulation of what is being termed the nuclear industry's dirtiest secret.

For decades, they say, Japanese atomic plants have maintained a two-tiered workforce: one made up of highly paid and well trained utility employees and another of contractors with less training and fewer health benefits.

In 2010, 88% of the 83,000 workers at the nation's 18 commercial nuclear power plants were contract workers according to Japan's Nuclear and Industry Safety Agency, a government regulator.



But nuclear experts point to what they call a lax safety culture that downplays the risk of radiation exposure.

Activists say utilities rely on a network of contractors, sub-contractors and sub-subcontractors to supply those who work for short periods, absorb a maximum of radiation and are then let go.

An assistant professor at Kyoto's University Research Reactor Institute, Hiroaki Koide, who is also author of the book "The Life of Nuclear Power", says "This job is a death sentence, performed by workers who aren't being given information about the dangers they face."

Source: Los Angeles Times, Dec 2011

The Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO) has defended its worker training which "includes basic knowledge of protection against radiation, such as how to manage radiation doses or how to put on or take off protective suits and other equipment."



CONSTRUCTION WORK EQUALS A LIFETIME RISK OF INJURY AND PREMATURE DEATH

Nearly all construction workers will experience one or more work-related injuries or illnesses over a lifetime plus a greater risk of premature death, according to new data released at the American Public Health Association's 139th Annual Meeting, held in Washington, DC.

Using multiple years of data from several national sources, including the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, researchers from the Center for Construction Research and Training estimate that over a 45-year career a construction worker has a 75 percent likelihood of experiencing a disabling injury.

Additionally, over the course of a career, the same worker has a one in 200 chance of being fatally injured on the job.

A Hispanic construction worker has a 20 percent higher likelihood of dying from a work-related injury.

The study also reveals that an individual who begins construction work at the age of 20 has a 15 per cent chance of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease over a lifetime and an 11 per cent chance of developing dust-related parenchymal chest X-ray changes.

Source: ISHN Nov 2011

CHINA AMENDS LAW TO BOOST OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS PREVENTION AND CONTROL

China's top legislature has adopted an amendment to the Law on Occupational Illness Prevention and Control in a bid to better protect worker's legal rights.

Occupational illness refers to those illnesses caused by contact with dust, radioactive materials or other poisonous, harmful elements during a worker's occupational activities with enterprises, public institutions and individual business units, according to the amended law.

The amended law highlights China's enhanced moves to simplify procedures to help those suffering from occupational illnesses and to protect worker's legal rights, as treatment for such illnesses has become a growing public concern.

China's modernisation drive over the past three decades spawned many enterprises, which - especially small and medium-sized firms - have long spent little on occupational health, resulting in a grim situation in regards to occupational illness prevention, according to officials.

China reported a total of over 27,000 new cases of work-related illnesses in 2010, according to figures from the Ministry of Health. Around 87 percent, or 23,000 cases, were of pneumoconiosis, while over 2,000 cases were of occupational poisoning. Among the total cases for 2010, 69 percent were reported from the coal, railway, and nonferrous metals sectors.

Gao Shimin, a senior official with the State Administration of Work Safety, said that the country's follow-up supervision is expected to reveal increasing numbers of cases of work-related illnesses.

"It is only the tip of the iceberg," referring to the reality that a huge number of workers seldom undergo occupational health examinations.

China previously adopted the Law on Occupational Illness Prevention and Control in 2001. However, recent years have seen a surge in media reports on the hard struggles faced by coal miners-turned-pneumoconiosis patients in getting appropriate treatment and compensation from their original employers.

In many cases, the patients even found it difficult to be diagnosed as occupational illness patients by certified occupational illness examination organizations if they could not produce enough evidence to link their symptoms with occupational activities.

China has over 200 million farmers-turned-migrant workers, which have grown to be the backbone of the country's industrial workers. However, in many of their work relationships, they could not get enough occupational health protection from employers, who sometimes wouldn't even bother signing a work contract with them.

The amendment is poised to dramatically change the situation by streamlining the process for the treatment of occupational illnesses and stressing enhanced occupational health measures by employers and government organs.

A worker can choose to undergo a health screening for occupational illnesses in the region where his or her employer operates, his or her own household registration area, or the region where he or she currently resides, according to the amendment.

It stipulates that one should be diagnosed as an occupational illness patient if no evidence can reject the necessary connection between his symptoms and the harmful elements related to such an illness.

Furthermore, according to the amendment, a patient of occupational illness can be determined based on other information, including the worker's symptoms and occupational history, even without the employer's document on harmful elements information in its offered occupations.

"All this is meant to better protect patients' rights," Su Zhi, a senior supervision official with the Ministry of Health, said, hinting that the amendment will help stop things from being deliberately made difficult for a worker.

The State Administration of Work Safety vowed to further urge employers to improve occupational health conditions, and greater efforts will be made to improve the occupational health inspection system nationwide.

The health ministry's next step will be to work together with other government organisations to upgrade the country's categorisation of occupational illnesses.

Source: CRJEnglish



MINIMAL AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REDUCES MORTALITY RISK AND INCREASES LIFE EXPECTANCY

In a prospective cohort study of 416,175 individuals who participated in a standard medical screening program in Taiwan between 1996 and 2008 with an average follow up of 8.05 years, researchers found that compared with individuals in an inactive group those who exercised for an average of 15 minutes a day had a 14% reduced risk of all-cause mortality and had a three year longer life expectancy.

Every additional 15 minutes of daily exercise beyond the minimum amount of 15 minutes further reduced all-cause mortality by 4% and all-cancer mortality by 1%.

These benefits were applicable to all age groups and both sexes and to those with cardiovascular disease risks.

Source: *The Lancet*

Sitting still a danger to our health, says Comcare

Workers can put their health at great risk if they sit at their desks all day without a break.

A trial by federal work health and safety regulator Comcare, released during Health and Safety Month, has revealed that taking regular breaks from sitting in the one spot can improve wellbeing.

Figures show that the typical office worker spends over two-thirds of their day remaining seated and inactive. It also found that even 30 minutes of exercise a day cannot offset the high risk of cardiovascular disease and death associated with prolonged sitting.

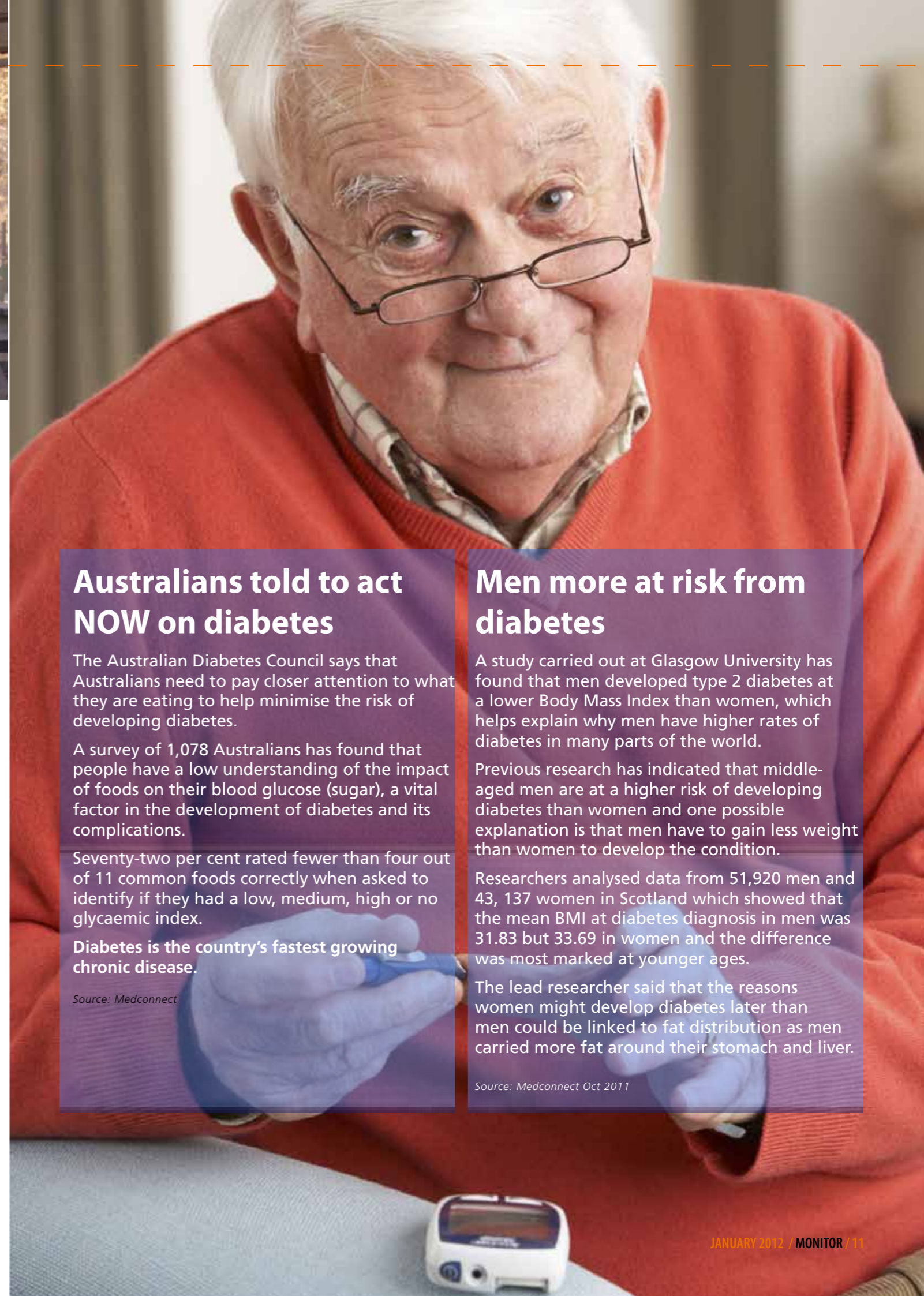
Comcare is currently piloting sit/stand workstations to reduce sedentary time by promoting more standing and increased movement.

Initial results indicate a reduction in sitting time across the day for the workers who were given these special workstations.

When analysed, it revealed a marked change in behaviour by participants with the amount of standing and stepping movement increasing noticeably.

Data from the trial, conducted in partnership with Baker IDI, continues to be analysed with results used to demonstrate a stronger link between sit/stand workstations and increased movement, with the goal of lowering health risks to workers.

Source: *Comcare News Release*



Australians told to act NOW on diabetes

The Australian Diabetes Council says that Australians need to pay closer attention to what they are eating to help minimise the risk of developing diabetes.

A survey of 1,078 Australians has found that people have a low understanding of the impact of foods on their blood glucose (sugar), a vital factor in the development of diabetes and its complications.

Seventy-two per cent rated fewer than four out of 11 common foods correctly when asked to identify if they had a low, medium, high or no glycaemic index.

Diabetes is the country's fastest growing chronic disease.

Source: *Medconnect*

Men more at risk from diabetes

A study carried out at Glasgow University has found that men developed type 2 diabetes at a lower Body Mass Index than women, which helps explain why men have higher rates of diabetes in many parts of the world.

Previous research has indicated that middle-aged men are at a higher risk of developing diabetes than women and one possible explanation is that men have to gain less weight than women to develop the condition.

Researchers analysed data from 51,920 men and 43,137 women in Scotland which showed that the mean BMI at diabetes diagnosis in men was 31.83 but 33.69 in women and the difference was most marked at younger ages.

The lead researcher said that the reasons women might develop diabetes later than men could be linked to fat distribution as men carried more fat around their stomach and liver.

Source: *Medconnect Oct 2011*

Navy discharging 64 sailors for drug use and distribution

The US Navy is discharging 64 sailors, 49 of them from the aircraft carrier that buried Osama bin Laden at sea, for using or distributing drugs.

Most of the sailors, who were

assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, nuclear submarine USS San Francisco and a floating fuelling dock, were caught using, possessing or selling the designer drug Spice, the Navy said.

Bin Laden was buried at sea from the Carl Vinson in May after the al Qaeda leader was killed in a raid by US Navy Seals on his Pakistan hide-out.

The ship normally has 5,000 sailors on board during deployment and a spokesman for the Third Fleet, Capt. Greg Hicks, said it was unknown if any of the sailors facing discipline were involved in the bin Laden operation.

"The Navy's policy on drug abuse

is simple and clear -- zero tolerance," Vice Admiral Gerald Beaman, commander of the Third Fleet, said in a written statement. "Drug use puts lives and missions at risk and undercuts unit readiness and morale."

"The use of designer drugs, to include Spice, is illegal and the Navy continues to aggressively investigate the use of synthetic drugs and hold those in violation accountable," he said.

Spice is a synthetic drug that mimics the effects of marijuana.

"All 64 will be administratively discharged. Whether or not it is characterized as a result of criminal behaviour, it will be an *other-than-honourable* discharge," Hicks said.

"No criminal charges have been issued, but some may face court-martial depending on the violations they are accused of," he said.

Source: AAP Reuters Oct 2011

The USS Carl Vinson

HEARING LOSS IN AMERICA

A study by Johns Hopkins University researchers has found that nearly a fifth of all Americans 12 years or older have hearing loss so severe that it may make communication difficult.

The researchers used data from a research program that has periodically gathered health data from thousands of Americans since 1971.

Hearing loss prevalence nearly doubled with every age decade with women and blacks being significantly less likely to have hearing loss at any age.

While the researchers aren't sure why these two groups appear to be protected they speculate that the female hormone estrogen, as well as the melatonin pigment in darker skin, could have a protective effect on the inner ear – topics they plan to research in future studies.

Source: ISHN Nov 2011

Shortage of OSH professionals coming soon in the USA

A new report from NIOSH predicts that the national demand for occupational safety and health services will far exceed the number of professionals with the necessary training, education and experience to provide them.

The conclusion is based on a national survey.

The need for an adequate supply of trained professionals is particularly great, as we anticipate that growing numbers of older professionals will retire over the next decade, says NIOSH Director Dr John Howard. Also new technologies continue to enter the workplace requiring specialised skills and knowledge, he notes.

While employers plan to have at least 25,000 OSH professionals in the next five years, only about 12,000 new graduates are expected from the academic programs that aim to fill the need.

Source: OHS Online Oct 2011



GENDER INEQUALITIES AND OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE

A study day will be held in Brussels on 31 January 2012 to look at gender inequality and occupational diseases as it is alleged that in most countries the bulk of the health impacts among female workers continue to be ignored by the systems for reporting, recognition and compensation, in respect of occupational diseases. These act as filters of various kinds which draw a cloak of invisibility over work-related impacts on women's health, in particular cancers and mental health issues.

Speakers from Quebec, Finland, France and Belgium will be focussing on analysing how these inequalities in treatment between men and women actually operate and how it is possible to rebuild the career path and get recognition for an occupational disease.

Source: HESA Dec 2011

HEALTH AND SHIFT WORK

Yet another study suggests that shift workers may face potential health concerns.

In this case, researchers at a medical centre in the Netherlands point to long-term elevated levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, found in shift workers which could increase the risk of cardiovascular problems, diabetes, hypertension or obesity.

This is the first study that shows that **working in shifts leads to changes in long-term cortisol levels**, suggesting that the stress hormone cortisol might be one of the factors contributing to the increased cardiovascular risks of shift workers.

The lead author of the study says that unravelling the role of cortisol in the health problems found in shift workers could result in new approaches to prevent cardiovascular damage in this specific group.

Source: EHS Today Oct 2011

Life for the young becoming too stressful

A study of 1,500 Australians has found that one in eight adults has severe stress, with those aged 18-25 more stressed and depressed than any other age group.

And to ease their stress people are turning to comfort food, drinking and shopping.

The executive director of the Australian Psychological Society, Lynn Littlefield, said the study found the main sources of stress for young people were money, work and relationships.

Source: Medconnect Nov 2011

Shift work in teens linked to increased multiple sclerosis risk

Researchers in Sweden have uncovered an association between shift work and increased risk of multiple sclerosis (MS). Those who engage in off-hour employment before the age of 20 may be at risk due to a disruption in their circadian rhythm and sleep patterns.

Analysing data from two population-based studies, one with 1,343 incident cases of multiple sclerosis (MS) and 2,900 controls and another with 5,129 prevalent MS cases and 4,509 controls, the researchers found a significant association between working shifts at a young age and occurrence of MS.

Results showed that those in the incident MS cohort who had worked off-hour shifts for three years or longer before age 20 had a two-fold risk of developing MS compared with those who never worked shifts. Similarly, subjects in the prevalent cohort who engaged in shift work as teens had slightly more than a two-fold risk of MS than subjects who had never worked shifts.

The authors suggest that disruption of circadian rhythm and sleep loss may play a role in the development of MS; however the exact mechanisms behind this increased risk remain unclear and further study is needed.

Source: Safety Solutions Oct 2011



QUALIFICATIONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTANTS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE IN THE UK

OH THAT PLACE...? WE SHUT THAT DOWN AGES AGO!

Following a review of the operation of health and safety laws in the UK in late 2010, which recommended simpler regulation for health and safety at work, the government appointed the Department of Work and Pensions to assume overall responsibility for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the "Common Sense Common Safety" report of Lord Young.

One of the more important recommendations was that professional health and safety consultants be required to meet the qualification requirements of professional bodies or associations.

Initially the HSE could take the lead in establishing the validation body for qualifications working with the relevant sector and professional bodies. However, this function should be run by the professional bodies as soon as possible.

Subsequently, the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register (OSHCR) was formally launched in March 2011. There are now 2,640 consultants on the register. The HSE has supported a number of participating professional bodies in establishing OSHCR as a not-for-profit company which can be accessed via the internet.

Establishing a similar register of appropriately qualified OHS professionals is of course long overdue in Australia to ensure that persons being employed in a professional capacity are accredited and competent to do so.

In the current climate of a limited supply of OHS professionals, positions are being advertised which specify the barest minimum qualifications for responsibilities that go way beyond the training and competency required for the advertised duties. Very seldom is a condition that membership of a professional body is a prerequisite for the position.

Safe Work Australia could play a leadership role in establishing a similar accreditation process and should do so as a matter of urgency before the criticism of the discipline in the UK emerges here in Australia.

The process of harmonising OHS legislation across Australia provides an excellent opportunity for this initiative to be taken.



AROUND THE GLOBE

Canada

Female shift

workers have a high prevalence of risk factors for heart disease

In a study recently presented at the 2011 Canadian Cardiovascular Congress the researchers reported a connection between shift work and risk factors for heart disease in female hospital employees who worked both shift and non-shift rotations.

The findings suggest that about one in five middle-aged women who work shifts have at least three risk indicators for heart disease.

Just how shift work contributes to the development of such risk factors isn't clear said the researchers, but it is possible that the disruption of biological rhythms, sleeping, eating and exercise patterns may be factors.

Source: Safety Reporter

Europe

Quality of life at workplace worsens in Europe between 1995 & 2005

Data from the European Working Conditions Surveys of 1995, 2000 and 2005 analysed on the basis of four indicators of the quality of life at the workplace: physical strenuousness, technical constraints, commercial constraints and the complexity of work, is considered by researchers from the Employment

Studies Centre to demonstrate a deterioration of the quality of life at the workplace.

Workers from the Mediterranean countries, in particular the Portuguese and the Greeks, feature at the bottom of the rankings.

Source: HESA Nov 2011

USA

Suicide incidence USA

According to research conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention someone in the USA dies by suicide every 15 minutes. And for every person who does there are many more who think about, plan or attempt suicide.

The suicide rates vary across states although the western states have been consistently higher.

The research undercovers the importance of collecting and using local information for prevention purposes. Continued surveillance is needed to design, implement and evaluate public health policies and programs that can lead to a reduction in morbidity and mortality related to suicide-related thoughts and behaviours.

Possible suicide prevention strategies include those designed for broad audiences, such as public education campaigns that focus on improving recognition of suicide risk, and more intensive strategies (e.g. cognitive-behaviour therapy) for those who are at heightened risk, such as people who have made suicide attempts.

In cognitive-behaviour therapy, the cognitive part helps people change thinking patterns, and the behavioural part helps people change the way they react to situations.

Source: OHS online Oct 2011

Failure to respond properly to workplace injury results in heavy fine

When an employee fell 11 feet to a concrete floor, sustaining broken bones and head trauma, store management, instead of providing medical attention, simply placed the employee in a wheelchair and left him in the store's receiving dock where he waited for a relative to take him to the hospital.

Following an OSHA inspection the company has been cited for 30 alleged wilful, repeat and serious violations of workplace safety standards and faces a total of US\$589,200 in proposed fines, chiefly for recurring fall and laceration hazards and also for improperly responding to a worker's serious injury.

Source: ISHN Oct 2011

Engineers seek changes to OHS legislation

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has submitted draft legislation to leaders in Congress in an effort to bolster employer responsibility for occupational safety.

The Society considers that the OSH Act, which was introduced in 1970, needs updating in order to be more effective in its outreach and to reflect rapidly advancing knowledge about maintaining safer workplaces and the protection of workers.

Given the history of rejection of any legislation that has the potential to increase costs for employers, prospects for adoption of the draft proposals are not bright.

Source: WSHA/EHS Today



MARCSTA Members

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 CGU Workers Compensation
 Downer EDI Engineering
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 Les McIntyre
 Neil McMeekin
 Katherine Montague
 John Preston
 Graeme Richards
 Jason Roberts
 Victor Roberts
 Julian Strudwick (C)
 Micheal White
 Paul Willoughby

All training providers listed provide the General Safety Induction program.

C denotes the Work Safely in the Construction Industry program.
 O denotes the OHS for Supervisors and Managers program.
 S denotes the Extended Working Hours program.
 R denotes Conduct Local Risk Control program
 U denotes the Underground program.



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