



Ergonomics and prevention

Recent trends in prevention
strategies in Denmark
– and their possible relevance in
Iceland

Jakob U. Christiansen,
MSc; Senior consultant in O H & S
JUC@birch-krogboe.dk
+45 3010 9708



CELEBRATIONS !!!

Already 10 years old..... And a strong and active member of the family.

Not (yet ??) becomming the 'difficult' teenager in the NES-family – rather a committet and responsible dear relative

You are great to work with !



Vision for O H & S prevention

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that the working conditions are safe and sound in any way.

The employees shall participate to full-fill this vision



Strategy for prevention

1. Information to expand general knowledge and understanding

2. Legislation and standards

- Relative and reflexive principles
- Normative principles divided into formal and material legislation
 - (WPA and limit values)
 - Principle of 'carefulness'
 - ISO & CEN standards



Confounders in culture and society

- Mis-match in economy / workforce / production = long work-hours
- Demographics – the aging workforce
- Globalisation
- Less active jobs
- People with higher BMI
- Declining muscle strength
- Liberal not social approach



New sub-strategies & tactics I

Economy – who has to pay ?

- In general insurance or society pay the bill
- *But is it fair and a motivation when “we all pay” instead of sending the bill to the person / enterprise responsible for the accident or bad health ?*
- *Should we look for principles where the responsible PAY in cash or by higher insurance bills ?*
- In DK we have a liberal government – but even though there is public commitment to expenses
- *How is it on Iceland ?*



New sub-strategies & tactics II

- **In DK limit values are the same no matter who You are and what You are capable of !**
- ***Targeting the average; every-body or high-risk people ?***
 - ***Young persons are protected but what about +60 ?***
 - **we must improve !!**
- Look at the risk for disc-failure (gender and age)
- Physical capacity (Vo₂; MVC)
- Genetics
- Capacity of mind – psychological profile



New sub-strategies & tactics III

- It is a fact that some enterprises put a lot of money in capacity building and competence of their workforce. So does society.
- We have learned that physical capacity is a confounder in ergonomic risk assessment
- *Should we alter limit-values in general ? - or rather introduce physical capacitybuilding in society and/or at the workplace ?*
- *One possibility could be workplace health promotion – by contract or voluntarily*



New sub-strategies & tactics IV

- The formal normative framework for O H & S in Europe is Work Place Assessment
- This is NOT enough to assure ergonomic prevention since methods for WPA are a free pick – You can ask people about symptoms, - but not about exposure and risks
- We also need prevention for long-term effects (like “RSI”)
- One way out is to perform risk-mapping and risk assessment inside the WPA or as a parallel process



New sub-strategies & tactics V

- In DK the health and safety organization often is the executive organ for O H & S even if legislation states that it is a forum for collaboration between management and employees
- *What if the CEO's did put out contracts on O H & S performance like they do on production and economics ?*



New sub-strategies & tactics VI

- In DK we have had a mandatory system of O H & S consulting – dedicated and designed for proactive prevention at the workplace
- This has shifted to a reactive system where The Working Environment Authority “sentence” a workplace with ‘problems’ to buy O H & S consulting
- The old system had room for improvements – and the new one is not ‘preventive enough’



My personal favorites.....

- Send the bill to the responsible person
- Move people out of 'high risk zones' if they belong to a group with low-tolerance
- Perform the principle or 'carefulness'
- CEO & management ALSO managing OHS
- Physical capacity building – to some extent
- WPA is great – but include risk-assessment
- Mandatory pro-active consulting for all
- Include OHS when introducing changes (a new tool, a new house, a new way of working)



..... And Your top 3 ??

- -----
- -----
- -----

Thank You - and all the best for the next
10 Years in Vinnis