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Global Leadership in Occupational and Workplace Health

How can occupational health help to shape the future?



What is occupational health?

Occupational health should aim at:

- the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations;
- the prevention amongst workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions;
- the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health;
- the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities;
- and, to summarize: the adaptation of work to the worker and of each worker to his or her job.

WHO/ILO joint Committee on Occupational Health



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 October 2019

74/2. Political declaration of the high-level meeting on universal health coverage

. . .

We, Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments, assembled at the United Nations on 23 September 2019...

We therefore commit to scale up our efforts and further implement the following actions:

32. Scale up efforts to promote healthier and safer workplaces and improve access to occupational health services, noting that more than 2 million people die every year from preventable occupational diseases and injuries;

64. Take necessary steps at the country level to protect health workers from all forms of violence, attacks, harassment and discriminatory practices, and to promote their decent and safe working environment and conditions at all times as well as ensure health workers' physical and mental health by promoting policies conducive to healthy lifestyles;

Labour and public health

The Labour Approach

Occupational Safety Health

Labour Contract
Employer's responsibility
Only at the workplace
Only work-related health issues
Negotiation between workers
and employers



The Public Health Approach

Workers' Health

All workers
Beyond the workplace
Responsibility of everybody
All health determinants
Other stakeholders: insurance,
health and environment authorities
Health protection based on
scientific evidence and social
preferences



United Nations

A/73/L.2

**General
Assembly**

Distr.: Limited
3 October 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda item 119
Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

**Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the
General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable
diseases**

We, Heads of State and Government and representatives of States and Governments, assembled at the United Nations on 27 September 2018...

44. Invite the private sector to strengthen its commitment and contribution to the implementation of national responses to prevent, control and treat non-communicable diseases to reach health and development objectives by:

(a) Promoting and creating safe and healthy working environments, by implementing occupational health measures, including by establishing tobacco-free workplaces, and through good corporate practices, workplace wellness programmes and health insurance plans, as appropriate;

The global landscape

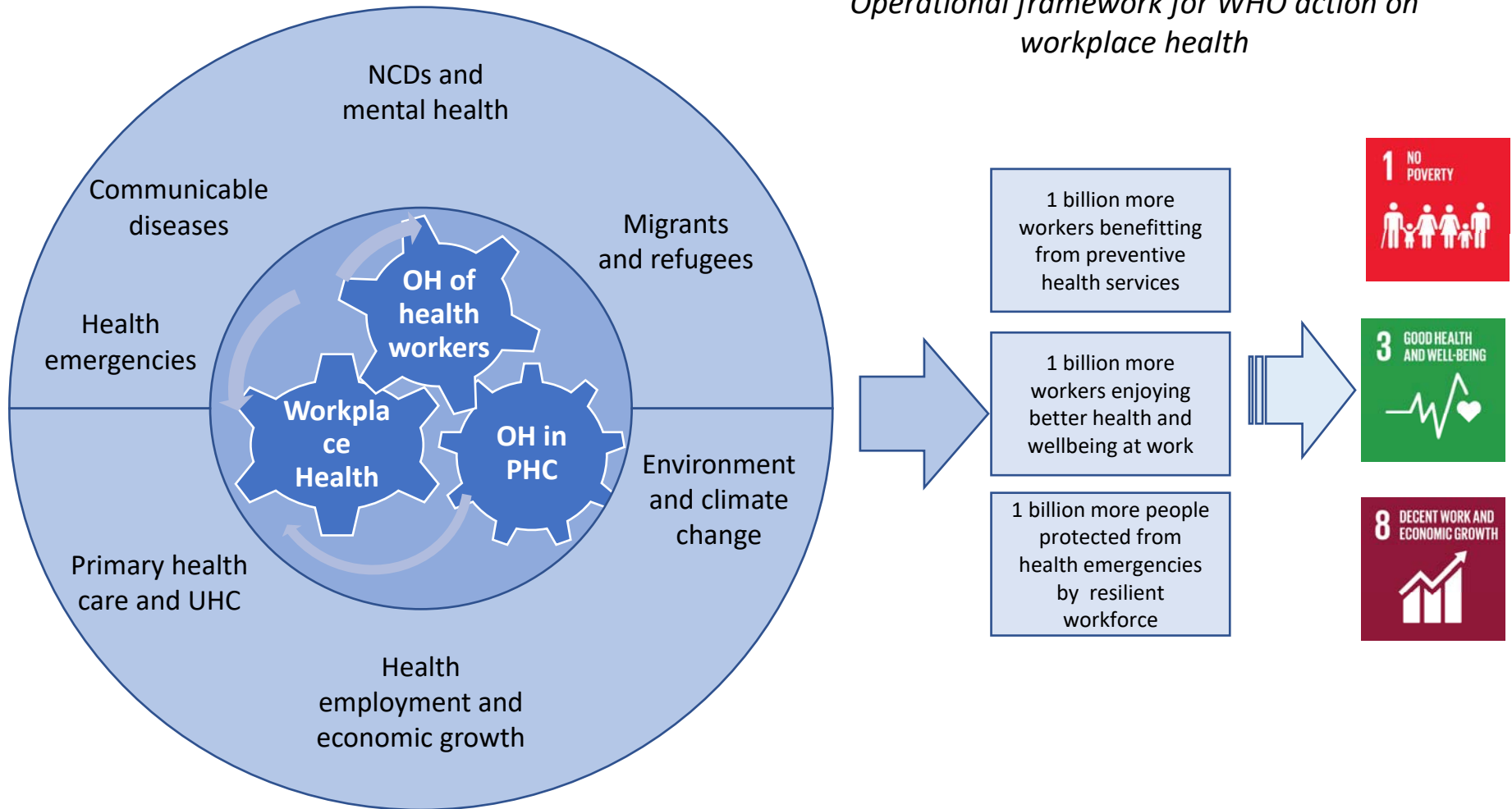
- UN multilateral agencies:
 - International Labour Organization
 - World Health Organization
- Global professional organizations
 - International commission on Occupational health
 - Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
 - International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative
 - International Ergonomic Association
 - International Occupational Hygiene Association
 - International Association of Labour Inspectors
- International organizations of workers and employers
- Business associations
- Civil society





Occupational
health is
mutidisciplinary

Operational framework for WHO action on workplace health





World Health
Organization

World Patient Safety Day
17 September 2020

Speak up for health worker safety!



Who cares for those who care?

Occupational health leadership for
protecting health and safety of health
workers

The painful facts

- 54% of health workers in low- and middle-income countries have **latent tuberculosis**, 25 times higher than the general population
- In the 2014–2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the **risk of infection** among health workers was 21 to 32 times higher than in the general adult population. In 2020, 14% (9 million) of COVID-19 infections were among health workers
- Between 44% and 83% of nurses in clinical settings in Africa have chronic **low back pain**
- Between 17% and 32% of health-care workers in developed countries suffer from **occupational burnout**
- Globally, 63% of health workers report experiencing any form of **violence** at the workplace
- Medical professions are also at higher risk of **suicide** in all parts of the world
- During COVID-19 pandemic, 23% of front-line health-care workers worldwide suffered **depression and anxiety** and 39% suffered insomnia

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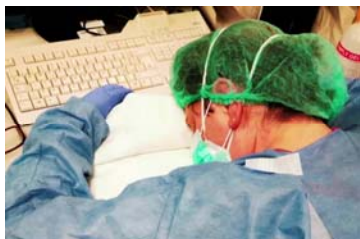
*WHO-ILO Global
Framework for
national
occupational health
programmes for
health workers*

1. Written policy on safety, health and working conditions at the national and facility levels
2. Responsible person/unit at national and facility level
3. Occupational health services, budget, personal protective equipment
4. Joint labour–management health and safety committees.
5. Ongoing (or periodic) education and training for responsible persons and health and safety committees
6. Risk assessment of workplaces, processes
7. Immunization against hepatitis B and other vaccine preventable diseases.
8. Exposure and incident reporting
9. Diagnosis, treatment, care and support for occupational infections.
10. Information systems, indicators
11. Compensation for work-related disability in accordance with national laws.
12. Research and evaluation
13. Environmental hygiene – healthcare waste, WASH, cleaning

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/10-06-2020-who-ilo-global-framework-for-national-occupational-health-programmes-for-health-workers>

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WHO call for action on health and safety of health workers in COVID-19



- Primary prevention of COVID-19 infections among health workers:
 - Infection prevention and control
 - Engineering, environmental, administrative controls
 - Health surveillance
- Zero-tolerance to violence against health workers at the workplace and at the way to and from their workplace, social support and respect for health workers and their families.
- Adequate staffing levels and clinical rotation in healthcare facilities, measures to minimize psychosocial hazards, and provision of access to mental health and psychosocial support for health workers
- Develop national programmes for occupational health for health workers
- Decent occupational health and IPC programmes in all healthcare facilities.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/28-04-2020-who-calls-for-healthy-safe-and-decent-working-conditions-for-all-health-workers-amidst-covid-19-pandemic>



World Patient Safety Day, 17 September 2020

CHARTER

Health worker safety: a priority for patient safety

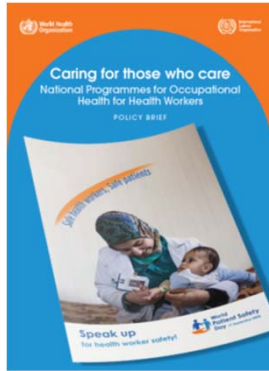
This Charter is dedicated to the millions of health workers' fighting COVID-19 across the globe who put themselves and their families at risk to treat patients, deliver essential health services and contain the spread of the disease; to the health workers who have become infected with COVID-19; and to those who have lost their lives in their unflinching efforts to combat the disease.

II. Call for urgent and sustainable action globally

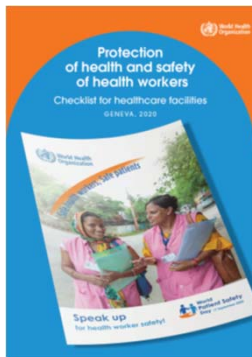
1. Establish synergies between health worker safety and patient safety policies and strategies
2. Develop and implement national programmes for occupational health and safety of health workers
3. Protect health workers from violence in the workplace
4. Improve mental health and psychological well-being of health workers
5. Protect health workers from physical and biological hazards

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/world-patient-safety-day/health-worker-safety-charter-wpsd-17-september-2020-3-1.pdf?sfvrsn=2cb6752d_2

Instruments for leadership



<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/caring-for-those-who-care>



<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/protection-of-health-and-safety-of-health-workers>

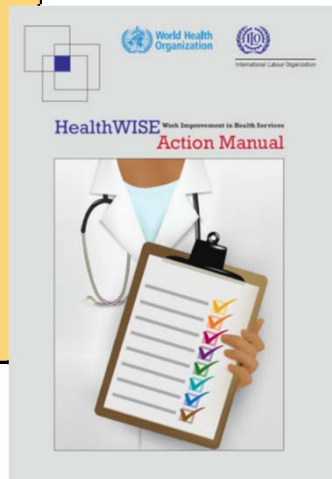
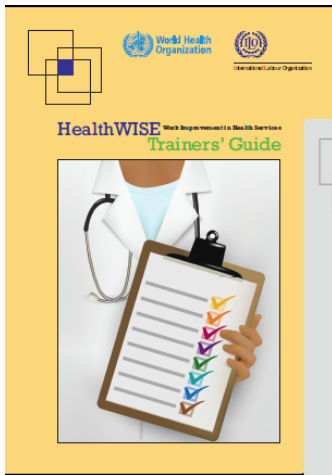
The image is a screenshot of the WHO course page. The header includes the WHO logo and navigation links: Home, About, Channels, Courses, News, English, and Log in. The main title is "Occupational health and safety for health workers in the context of COVID-19". Below the title is a navigation bar with icons for Learnings, Discussions, Progress, Certificates, Collab Space, Course Details, Documents, and Announcements. A yellow banner on the right says "Course is available". The main content area features a photograph of a healthcare worker in full PPE (goggles, mask, hairnet, and gown) writing on a clipboard. To the right of the photo is a list of course details: "All health workers require knowledge and skills to protect themselves and others from the occupational risks they encounter, so that they can work safely and effectively. This course consists of five sections in response to these needs." followed by a bulleted list of modules: Introduction, Module 1: Infectious risks to health and safety, Module 2: Physical risks to health and safety, Module 3: Psychosocial risks to health and safety, and Module 4: Basic occupational health and safety in health services. Below the list are icons for social media sharing (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Email) and course details: Self-paced, Language: English, COVID-19, and an "Enroll me for this course" button.

<https://openwho.org/courses/COVID-19-occupational-health-and-safety>

53350 enrollements as of 3 Dec 2020

English, French, Spanish, Portugese, Macedonan, Swahili

Instruments for leadership



ILO/WHO HealthWISE tool - Work Improvement in Health Services

English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Chinese

https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/training-materials/WCMS_250540/lang-en/index.htm



WHO/ILO Occupational safety and health in public health emergencies

A manual for protecting health workers and responders
English, French, Spanish, Chinese

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/occupational-safety-and-health-in-public-health-emergencies-a-manual-for-protecting-health-workers-and-responders>

Challenges

- Fragmentation, lack of connection, silos, competition between programmes
- Insufficient regulatory coverage with occupational safety and health laws
- Privatization of healthcare services – profit first
- Low coverage with occupational health services in the health sector
- In the health sector everybody is specialist in health, difficult to make decisions
- No financial instruments for health worker safety
- Insufficient political commitment, no duty of care
- New business models in healthcare – subcontracting, liberal medicine
- Insufficient social dialogue



Shoemakers' Children Go Barefoot

Occupational health in COVID-19

The screenshot shows the WHO EPI-WIN website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Health Topics, Countries, Newsrooms, Emergencies, and About Us. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads "EPI-WIN: WHO information network for epidemics". A sub-heading states: "EPI-WIN seeks to give everyone access to timely, accurate, and easy-to-understand advice and information from trusted sources on public health events and outbreaks: currently the COVID-19 public health emergency." The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Audiences", features a grid of nine resource cards with images and titles: "Individuals and communities", "Travel and tourism sector", "Health sector", "Employers and workers", "Faith-based organizations and faith leaders", "Large event organizers", "Countries", "Food and agriculture sectors", and "Cities and local governments". The right column, titled "Webinars", features a video player for "Immunity passports" dated 1 May 2020. Below the video player is a section titled "Our activities" with a list of links: "EPI-WIN updates", "Infodemic management", "All visual tools", "About EPI-WIN", and "Related health topic". Under "Related health topic", there is a link for "Coronavirus".

Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19

<https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1275007/retrieve>

Annex 1. Considerations for public health and social measures in the workplace in the context of COVID-19

<https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1277575/retrieve>

Q&A: Tips for health and safety at the workplace in the context of COVID-19

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-tips-for-health-and-safety-at-the-workplace-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

Challenges

- Occupational health disconnected from public health and emergency response
- Insufficient scientific evidence for occupational risks and effectiveness of interventions
- Lack of understanding among public health experts what occupational health can offer
- Perceived conflicts of interests
- Competing agendas with other public health disciplines
- Perception that occupational health can slow down the emergency response



'Asks' to the private sector in the response to COVID-19



Protect your stakeholders

- ✓ **Protect the health of your staff, community, service providers and clients** by informing them about COVID-19 and WHO recommended protection measures at workplaces and towards external stakeholders
- ✓ **Protect jobs and livelihoods** to lower the impact of the crisis on people and the community
- ✓ **Support WHO** in managing the global infodemic and fighting mis-information



Essential supplies



Protect your business

- ✓ **Put business continuity plans into action**, in coordination with local/national authorities
- ✓ **Prioritize supply chain continuity** of essential health and non-health products (food, soap, etc.)
- ✓ **Maintain essential support infrastructures and services** (water, transports, electricity, hygiene and waste management, etc.)
- ✓ **Protect jobs** to retain skills and experience
- ✓ **Act responsibly towards your suppliers** and service providers



Financial

WHO, 'Asks' to the private sector in the response to COVID-19, 11 June 2020
<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/asks-to-the-private-sector-in-the-response-to-covid-19>



WHO MANIFESTO FOR A HEALTHY RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Healthy, safe and resilient workplaces for all

- Implement national policies and action plans on occupational safety and health [32-34].
- Scale up coverage with essential interventions and basic occupational health services of all workers for primary prevention of occupational and work-related diseases and injuries and promote healthier and safer workplaces, including for migrant and contractual workers and those in the informal economy [34, 35].
- Build workplace resilience to public health emergencies and outbreaks of infectious diseases in all economic sectors [35].

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/climate-change/who-manifesto-for-a-healthy-and-green-post-covid-recovery.pdf>



Can
occupational
health play a
global
leadership role?