

**Media Release****Steps towards safer workplaces**

Researchers have developed a new tool to help employers create safer workplaces by better preventing injury and illness.

A Monash research team has tested a practical survey tool originating in Canada, called the Organizational Performance Metric (OPM), that employers can use to help them identify areas for health and safety improvement, people who are more at risk in the workplace, and steps to prevent incidents from occurring.

As part of a larger national study, they assessed the usefulness of the OPM - a measure of eight occupational health and safety (OHS) leading indicators - to assess employees' views of how healthy and safe their workplaces were.

The team combined the results of two separate studies of over 1400 Australian workplaces and over 3500 Australian workers.

The results highlighted that in workplaces with greater commitment to health, wellbeing and safety, individuals experienced fewer injuries and illness at work, which in turn was associated with fewer claims or incidents causing time lost from work.

Lead researcher Professor Helen De Cieri, Monash Business School, said the indicator provided a sense of an organisation's ongoing health and safety initiatives, and its potential for injuries and illnesses before they occur.

"Worldwide, there is strong interest among government and industry stakeholders in the use of leading indicators as a measure of workplace health and safety performance," Professor De Cieri said.

"We want to shift the focus of workplaces from counting the cost of injuries and illness to better work practices that prevent incidents, with more attention to OHS leadership, equipment and resources, and access to health and safety training.

"We've found that the tool is a simple way for workplaces to identify areas for health and safety improvement, people who are more at risk in the workplace, and steps to prevent incidents from occurring."

Professor De Cieri said the research could also help policy-makers and employers make decisions about distribution of health and safety resources.

The survey is part of a larger ongoing research project looking at workplace health and safety perceptions and performance across various industries, which has included the nursing and education sectors.

The research also found that the OPM is an effective way to predict work health and safety outcomes such as time of work due to injury or illness, for benchmarking purposes to compare across industries and between workplaces and that leadership and management commitment to health and safety are associated with health and safety performance.

The project was conducted by Monash University in partnership with WorkSafe Victoria, the Institute for Safety, Compensation and Recovery Research (ISCRR), and SafeWork Australia. ISCRR is a research partnership between the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), WorkSafe Victoria and Monash University.

**For more information contact Monash Media & Communications + 61 3 9903 4840 or [media@monash.edu](mailto:media@monash.edu).**