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GUEST EDITORIAL

Promoting Occupational Health Psychology through professional bodies: The role of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology

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In 2019, the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EAOHP) celebrated its 20th Anniversary. EAOHP is a non-profit, non-governmental, scientific and professional organisation and a registered charity that aims to promote worker health, safety and well-being in primarily the Western world. EAOHP's 20th anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on the evolution and advancement in topics, approaches and future perspectives in occupational health psychology (OHP), highlighting the role that professional organizations such as EAOHP play. Specifically, the EAOP was established to stimulate and promote research, education and practice in OHP. We review key developments and achievements in these three areas to show that the EAOHP, together with other OHP professional organizations, has been instrumental in: a) promoting the development of a core curriculum and textbooks in OHP as well as postgraduate and workplace training programmes; b) stimulating intellectual debate and research in Europe and internationally; and c) supporting policy initiatives at national, European and international levels that have had a positive impact on practice.

Achievements in research, education, policy and practice

The development of OHP in the Western world has moved on four mutually influencing levels, namely research, education, policy and practice. EAOHP has sought to bring together and support those concerned with the health, wellbeing and safety of workers operating at these levels. The EAOHP was born out of research developments in OHP that included important achievements from the late 70s onwards with the development of key theories and approaches to deal with health,

wellbeing and safety (including, but not limited to, Cox, 1978; Karasek, 1979; Siegrist, 1996; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The application of the risk management paradigm in this area (Cox, 1993), led to the development of a taxonomy of psychosocial risks and their recognition as major sources of work-related stress, which was promoted by the European Agency of Occupational Safety and Health (EU-OSHA, 2000). This was later on adapted into the European Framework for Psychosocial Risk Management (PRIMA-EF) in 2008.

Since its establishment, EAOHP has been at the forefront of these developments. EAOHP has played a major role in shaping the OHP research debate through its association with *Work & Stress*, which has a strong emphasis on practice-related research including intervention research. To foster a debate on ongoing and emerging themes in OHP, the EAOHP hosts biennial conferences (fourteen to date) bringing together academics, students, practitioners, policy makers and other stakeholders from around the world to engage in debate and share knowledge and good practices that promote worker health, safety and well-being (Iavicoli, Natali, Deitingner et al., 2011). The three EAOHP fora on research, education and practice have been instrumental in engaging these stakeholders and promoting knowledge and good practices.

Furthermore, EAOHP supported the development of, and cooperation with, other OHP professional organizations around the world such as the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP) in the US, the Asia Pacific Academy for Psychosocial Factors at Work (APA-PFAW) and the International Commission on Occupational Health Scientific Committee on Work Organization & Psychosocial Factors (ICOH-WOPS). The Academy has signed memoranda of cooperation with several of these organizations as well as with national bodies (e.g. the British Psychological Society in the UK). To enable the global promotion of OHP research, education, policy and practice, EAOHP co-founded the International Coordinating Group of OHP (ICG-OHP) together with EU-OSHA, the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the American Psychological Association (APA), which has since then expanded and now includes the APA-PFAW, ICOH-WOPS and other emerging OHP groups in Latin America.

Promoting education in particular, this collaboration was instrumental in defining a core OHP curriculum in the early 2000s and supporting the establishment of postgraduate OHP programmes in Europe and the US. It also resulted in the first OHP textbook in 2010 (Leka & Jain, 2010) and a collaborative book series with the US Society of Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP). Additionally, the Academy has promoted psychosocial risk management e-training (PRIMA-eT), that will soon be made available through the EAOHP website. At the policy level, the implementation of the European Union Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on Safety and Health of Workers at Work, which stated employers' obligation to assess and manage all types of risk to workers' health and safety in a preventive manner, including psychosocial risks (European Commission, 2014), resulted in follow-up policy-oriented research and associated developments in practice. In the UK, EAOHP supported the development of the HSE Management Standards for Work-related Stress. Following the signing of the European framework agreement on work-related stress in 2004, PRIMA-EF was developed and was promoted by the World Health Organization (Leka & Cox, 2008). It provided a comprehensive best practice framework for psychosocial risk management at work including international standards, best-practice guidance and awareness campaigns. It has been used to inform policy and practice across Europe as well as in other countries, e.g. Australia, Brazil, Japan, Mexico. PRIMA-EF was in 2011 translated into the first national standard on psychosocial risk management in the UK, PAS1010, promoted by the British Standards Institution, which informed the development of the Canadian national standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace in 2013 (Leka, Jain, Iavicoli & Di Tecco, 2015). Both these standards are currently feeding into the development of the first international standard in this area, ISO 45003. Other examples of actions at the European level are found in reports and tools, for example by EU-OSHA, providing accessible data, information, and good practices to stakeholders through the European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), the Online interactive Risk Assessment platform (OiRA), and its campaigns on healthy workplaces.

EAOHP has played a key role in establishing and promoting the discipline of OHP by bringing together researchers, policy makers and practitioners and mobilising coordinated action through the ICG-OHP to promote key initiatives and good practices. Cutting edge knowledge has been disseminated through its conferences, including through special research and policy sessions, and the three EAOHP fora on research, education and practice. Support has been provided to several national, European and international initiatives, including the development of regional OHP groups. The achievements outlined would not have been possible without the Academy's contribution and sustained dedication to OHP research, education and practice.

Changes in working life: The future role of EAOHP

Although significant achievements have been made over the past years, it is now more important than ever for OHP to reflect and consolidate existing knowledge and to address emerging risks while continuing to translate knowledge into policy and practice. A major challenge for OHP is to address the changes we see in labour demographics and new ways of working. Zero hour contracts, the gig economy and subcontracting blur the boundaries for who is responsible for the health and safety of workers and the precarious nature of these jobs makes it difficult to understand the long-term impacts of work on employee health and well-being. Obvious issues are the lack of stable income and job insecurity, which are related to mental health problems; although workers work less hours, they may spend their working hours worrying about when they will work again. Unstable employment also mean workers cannot take time off and this raises issues about recovery. Furthermore, precarious workers are inadequately covered by employment and health and safety legislation as has become clear in the recent Covid-19 virus pandemic.

The way work is organized in organizations has also changed. Workers no longer need to be in one place, but can work from home, on the road and in other organizations' location. Especially in light of Covid-19, remote working is likely to change the landscape of working permanently. Leading these workers, building social relations with colleagues and gaining access to health and safety

management policies may prove challenging. Ironically, another strategy for organizations to gain competitive advantage is that workers are organised in teams, requiring the ability to develop social relations and engage in collective decision making. These changes in demands and resources are complex and need to be understood better. As robots and cobots (collaborative robots) enter the workforce, working conditions change. It has been argued that workload may diminish, but cognitive load, changes to physical working conditions and safety need to be carefully managed.

They key developments can be seen in terms of labour demographics: the ageing workforce; the feminization of the workforce; and increased immigration. These changes in demographics require changes to working practices and policies as these groups face specific challenges, e.g. reduced physical abilities, a dual role with care responsibilities and cultural and language barriers.

These developments have resulted in identified gaps in knowledge, policy and practice that OHP researchers, policy makers and practitioners need to address. The EAOHP plays a key role in providing a platform where academics, practitioners and policy makers can come together to understand the implications of these changes. Existing regulation and policy frameworks are not adequately developed to address the rapidly changing nature of work, working arrangements and changes in demographics. The Future of Work and sustainability are two key priorities in policy and practice (e.g. EU-OSHA, 2018; ILO, 2019). OHP has a key role to play in the development of a human-centred approach to the future of work addressing technology, demographics, sustainable development, and work organization. This should include the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions (in policy, education/training and practice) to promote appropriate skills, equality, and working conditions that ensure health, safety and well-being as fundamental rights at work. This focus aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, explicitly including mental health, decent work and equality (United Nations, 2015).

EAOHP can coordinate such efforts and engage with key stakeholders that drive current policy agendas in the priority areas of the future of work and sustainability. In order to move forward, it is

important to critically evaluate the current state-of-the-art concerning existing policies and practices, and work to develop them in a way that allows both integration of isolated efforts as well as foresight and development of sustainable solutions. Aligning perspectives and mainstreaming health, safety and well-being at different levels from micro to macro, is crucial to achieve this (Jain, Leka & Zwetsloot, 2018). OHP as a discipline is pivotal in addressing the new and emerging challenges identified and promoting innovation in thinking (theory and research) and doing (policy and practice).

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