Developing a Measure of Respectful Workplaces
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I.   Background

The concept of civility in the workplace is attracting attention as a focus for interventions that improve employee morale, productivity, and psychological wellbeing (e.g., Leiter, Laschinger, Day, & Oore, 2011). Civility refers to behaviour that is considerate and respectful to others. Its converse, incivility, embraces a range of behaviours that show disrespect. Civility has positive consequences for individuals and organizations whilst incivility has the opposite effect (Leiter et al., 2011).

The final report of the 2005 *Queensland Health Systems Review* emphasised the need for Queensland Health to ensure that its staff are "treated well, valued, and fairly paid" (p. 342). This aspect of organisational culture can best be monitored through the regular two-yearly cultural surveys. To this end, the Community and Organizational Research (CORE) unit of the University of Southern Queensland undertook to develop a measure of respectful workplaces using questions already included in the QLD Health *betterworkplaces* survey (see Jury et al, 2009).

II.   Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop and validate scale(s) from the existing survey that can be used to report on this aspect of organizational functioning in the 2011 *betterworkplaces* survey.

III. Methodology

The analyses were based on data from the April 2010 survey (N = 8,364) and validated using data from the October 2010 (N = 3,396) survey. The *betterworkplaces* survey contained scales designed to measure the following constructs:

1. Stress and Work Pressure
2. Morale and Job Satisfaction
3. Communication
4. Feeling Valued

5. Performance Feedback

6. Training and Career Development

7. Feeling Involved

8. Supervisor Support

9. Peer Support

10. Role Clarity

11. Employee Engagement

12. Trust in Leadership (Immediate, Senior, Executive)

13. Support for Managing Others

14. Work Area Management Practices

15. Workplace Health & Safety

16. Clinical Communication

17. Clinical Management Practices

18. Multidisciplinary Team Support for Patient Care

The content of individual items for all scales was examined to discover which items had the potential to act as indicators of respect in the workplace. The literature on civility and the reform principles outlined in Queensland Health Systems Review were used as a guide to the selection of items. Exploratory factor analysis was then used to determine whether there were underlying dimensions of respect that could be identified from the inter-item covariance matrix. The factors identified in this process were used to form scales.

The purpose of these exploratory data analytic strategies was to arrive at a set of measures that would assess different aspects of a respectful workplace and help to explain organizational outcome variables such as engagement, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

IV.   Results

i.   Factor Analysis of Items

A total of 26 items were identified as potential indicators of respectful workplaces. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of these 26 items yielded a five-factor solution with the five factors labelled: Being Kept Informed; Personal Respect; Personal Safety; Appreciation and Recognition; Fair Practices. These results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Factor Structure of Respectful Workplaces Scale (items from April 2011)

No	Item	Factor
1	WK18 My colleagues support me	Personal Respect
3	WK21 I am accepted by the staff I work with	Personal Respect
4	WK22 Staff share their knowledge with others in this work area	Personal Respect
5	WK23 My colleagues can be relied upon when things get difficult in my job	Personal Respect
6	WK28 The staff I work with treat me with respect	Personal Respect
7	WK2 I am respected for my skills and experience	Apprec. & Recog.
8	WK26 My work is appreciated and acknowledged	Apprec. & Recog.
9	WK32 Decision-making processes include all relevant members of the team.	Apprec. & Recog.
10	WK33 My immediate supervisor supports staff in this work area	Apprec. & Recog.
11	WK42 My role is valued within my work area	Apprec. & Recog.
12	WK43 My work performance is appropriately recognised	Apprec. & Recog.
13	C2 Processes are changed with sufficient communication to those who are affected	Kept Informed
14	C3 There is no reluctance to freely share information in the work area	Kept Informed
15	C4 Changes made within the district/division are communicated well to staff	Kept Informed
16	C6 Communication between management and staff is open and transparent	Kept Informed
17	C8 Staff don't regularly hear about changes via the grapevine	Kept Informed
18	C9 Staff are informed in a timely manner about changes that may affect their performance, job or future	Kept Informed
19	MP1 Recruitment and selection practices are transparent and fair	Fair Practices
20	MP2 Problems are managed in a timely and appropriate manner	Fair Practices
21	MP3 Staff are treated fairly when mistakes are made	Fair Practices
22	MP4 Work is allocated fairly	Fair Practices
23	HS1 There is genuine commitment by management to staff safety in my work area	Personal Safety
24	HS6 Physical and psychological well-being are actively promoted in my work area.	Personal Safety
25	HS7 Preventative and safe return to work programs are actively supported in my work area quickly and effectively	Personal Safety
26	HS8 Safety issues are assessed and managed quickly and effectively	Personal Safety

ii.   Descriptive Statistics

On the basis of the EFA, scales were formed by taking the mean of the items defining each factor. Descriptive statistics for these scales are shown in Table 2 and the correlations are shown in Table 3.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Respectful Workplaces Scales

Scale	Items	Mean	SD	Alpha
Personal Respect	5	3.82	.72	.89
Appreciation and Recognition	6	3.33	.86	.90
Kept Informed	6	2.91	.83	.86
Fair Practices	4	3.17	.88	.86
Personal Safety	4	3.52	.75	.84

Table 3

Correlations Among Respectful Workplaces Scales

Scale	1	2	3	4
1. Personal Respect				
2. Appreciation and Recognition	.61			
3. Kept Informed	.41	.69		
4. Fair Practices	.46	.68	.66	
5. Personal Safety	.43	.61	.57	.62

The scales are all moderately correlated, as is appropriate for the facets of a single dimension, but not to the point where they share more than 50% variance.

iii.   Respectful Workplaces as a Predictor of Workplace Outcomes

Employee Engagement

All five scales together explained 24% of the variance in Employee Engagement, with Personal Safety making the largest unique contribution.

Job Satisfaction

Again, all five scales together explained 46% of the variance in Job Satisfaction, with Appreciation and Recognition making the largest unique contribution.

Stress and Work Pressure

All five scales were correlated with Stress and Work Pressure but only four of them (Personal Respect being the exception) contributed uniquely to the prediction of this variable.

Career Intentions

All five scales together explained 14.7% of the variance in Considering Leaving Job, with Appreciation and Recognition making the largest unique contribution.

Experiencing Harmful Behaviours

All five scales together explained 13.4% of the variance, with all variables contributing equally (except Kept Informed).

iv.   Overlap with Existing Better Workplace Scales

The 26 items included in this search for measures of respectful workplaces were all selected on the basis that their content appeared to reflect different aspects of respect. Factor analysis of the inter-item correlation matrix resulted in the five dimensions described above. Comparisons of scales based on these dimensions with scales normally obtained from the *betterworkplaces* survey shows that there is a close correspondence between the following scales:

1.   Personal Respect overlaps substantially with Peer Support;
2.   Appreciation and Recognition overlaps substantially with Feeling Valued; and
3.   Kept Informed overlaps substantially with Communication.

Such overlap is to be expected. When 26 items from an established instrument are factor analysed, some of the dimensions covered by that instrument should be identified. The question is, to what extent are the new dimensions different and to what extent do they contribute incremental validity when predicting important organizational outcomes?

To answer this question, a series of regression analyses were conducted wherein existing Better Workplaces scales were included with the five new Respectful Workplaces scales as predictors of job satisfaction, employee engagement, stress and work pressure, turnover

intentions, and experiencing harmful behaviours. The results indicate that the new measures contribute a small amount of incremental variance to the prediction of job satisfaction and work stress (they perform about equally well as the measures of peer support, feeling valued, role clarity, and communication). However, they are better predictors of harmful behaviours and make a useful contribution to the prediction of turnover intentions.

V.   Reducing the Respectful Workplace Scale to Nine Items

To reduce the overlap with existing scales, further analyses were conducted with a view to reducing the number of items in an aggregate measure of Workplace Respect. The following nine items were sufficient to define a near-unidimensional scale with high internal consistency reliability (alpha = .91).

Table 4

Nine-item Respectful Workplaces Scale (Item label reference: May 2010)

No	Item	Factor
1	WkMates14: The staff I work with treat me with respect	Respectful Workplace
2	Role07: I am respected for my skills and experience	Respectful Workplace
3	Role17: My work is appreciated and acknowledged	Respectful Workplace
4	Role06: My role is valued within my work area	Respectful Workplace
5	HCV05: Communication between management and staff is open and transparent	Respectful Workplace
6	HCV03: Staff are informed in a timely manner about changes that may affect their performance, job or future	Respectful Workplace
7	Manage02: Problems are managed in a timely and appropriate manner	Respectful Workplace
8	Manage03: Staff are treated fairly when mistakes are made	Respectful Workplace
9	Manage04: Work is allocated fairly	Respectful Workplace

As a predictor, this nine-item abbreviated scale performed almost as well as the aggregate measure based on 26 items.

VI.   Cross-Validation

Without going into details, the findings reported above were reproduced when the analyses were conducted on the data from the *betterworkplaces* Oct 2011 survey (N = 3,396).

VII.   Recommendations

Include a section in the QLD Health reports on Respectful Workplaces. The one new item that has been added to the 2011 survey ("Considering all my efforts and achievements, I feel that I receive the respect I deserve at work") will help to define this new domain, making a new 10-item scale. These 10 items are listed in Appendix B.

The section on Respectful Workplaces would include a description of the new measures, acknowledging the overlap of the scales mentioned above but emphasising the point that the new measures specifically target respect in the workplace [same tools but configured differently to address a different problem]. Role clarity can be added as another predictor of Respectful Workplaces.

VIII.   Actions

The nine items shown in Table 4 were present in both the 2010 surveys. Benchmark data can be obtained from these datasets and used in the 2011 reports. Item 46 in the 2011 survey (the new item for the Respectful Workplaces scale) may not be included in the 2011 graphs where benchmarking occurs. A decision will be made when the effect of including this item is known.

Appendix A shows what the Respectful Workplaces graphs might look like.

IX.   References

Jury, C., Machin, M. A., Phillips, J., Goh, H. E., Olsen, S., & Patrick, J. (2009). Developing and implementing an action-oriented staff survey: Queensland Health and the "Better Workplaces" initiative. *Australian Health Review, 33* (3), 365-370.

Forster, P. (2005). *Queensland Health Systems Review: Final Report*. http://www.health.qld.gov.au/health_sys_review/final/default.asp).

Leiter, M. P., Laschinger, H. K. S., Day, A., & Oore, D. G. (2011). The impact of incivility interventions on employee social behavior, distress, and attitudes. *Journal of Applied Psychology* (in press).

X.   Core Staff Connected with this Project

Prof Tony Machin (Director of CORE)

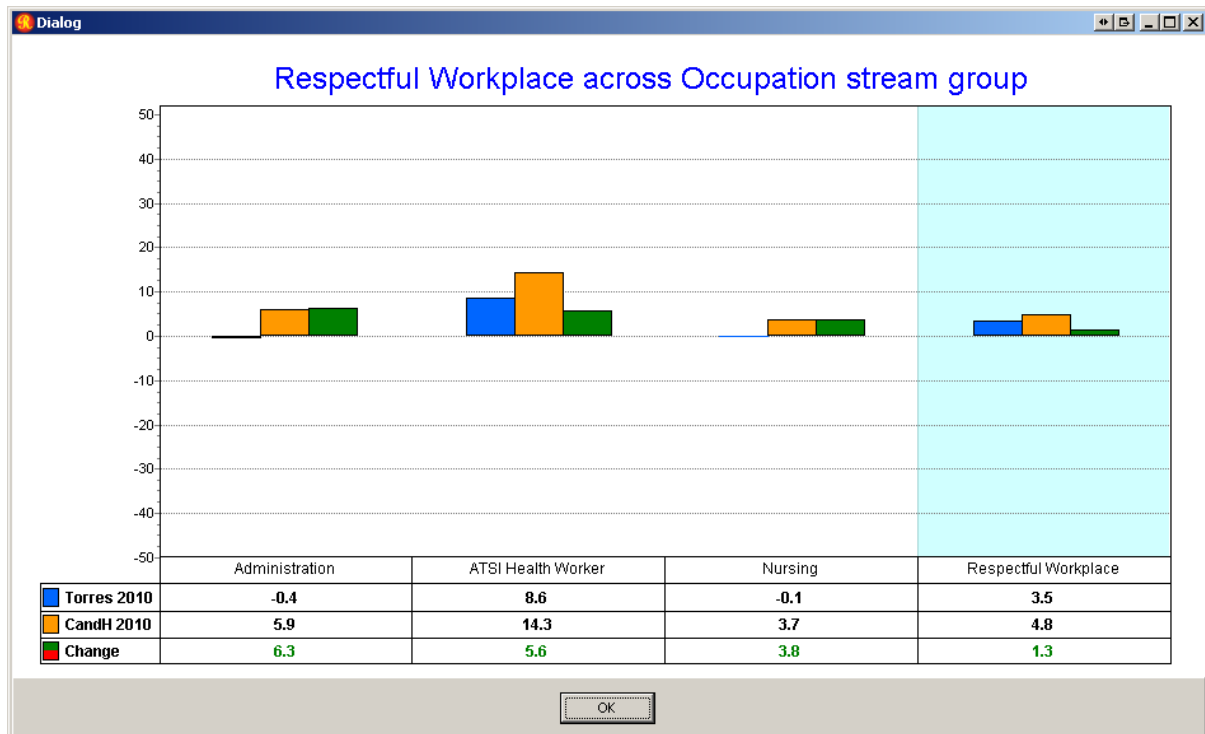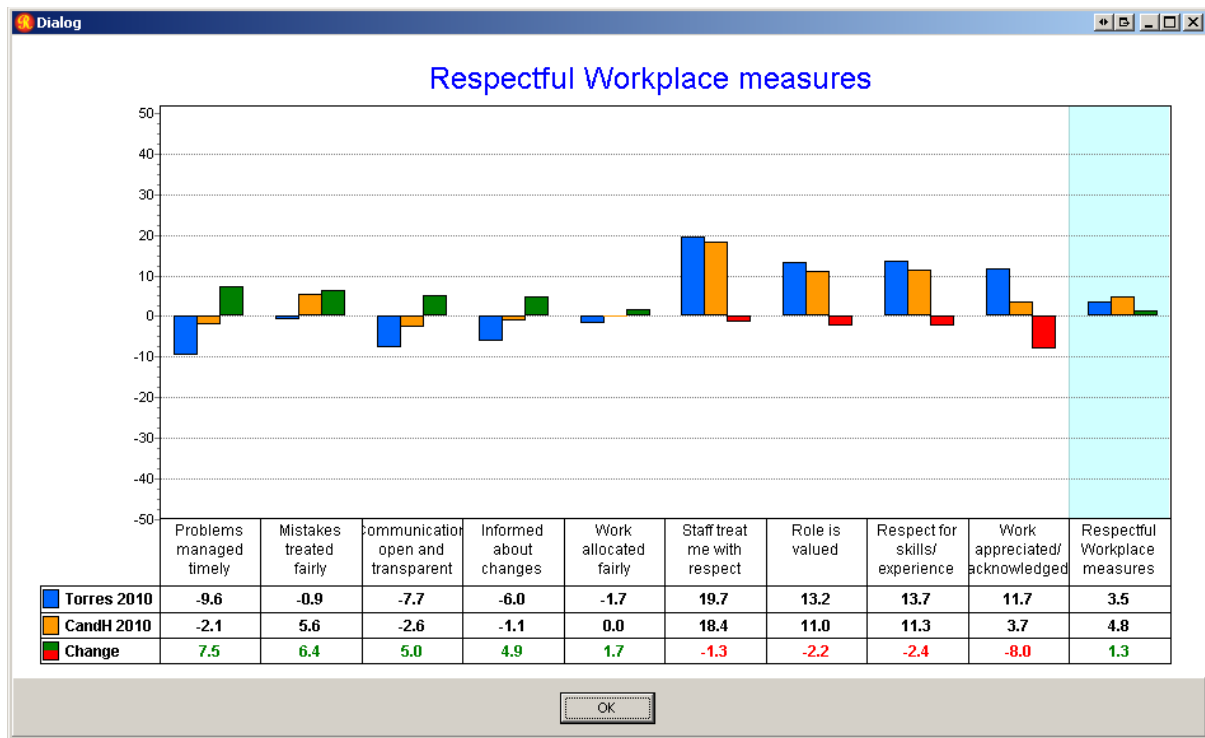Prof Gerard J Fogarty (lead investigator and author)

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XI.   Appendix A

Respectful Workplace measures

	Problems managed timely	Mistakes treated fairly	Communication open and transparent	Informed about changes	Work allocated fairly	Staff treat me with respect	Role is valued	Respect for skills/ experience	Work appreciated/ acknowledged	Respectful Workplace measures
Torres 2010	-9.6	-0.9	-7.7	-6.0	-1.7	19.7	13.2	13.7	11.7	3.5
CandH 2010	-2.1	5.6	-2.6	-1.1	0.0	18.4	11.0	11.3	3.7	4.8
Change	7.5	6.4	5.0	4.9	1.7	-1.3	-2.2	-2.4	-8.0	1.3

Respectful Workplace across Occupation stream group

	Administration	ATSI Health Worker	Nursing	Respectful Workplace
Torres 2010	-0.4	8.6	-0.1	3.5
CandH 2010	5.9	14.3	3.7	4.8
Change	6.3	5.6	3.8	1.3

XII.   Appendix B

Items to be included in the 10 item Respectful Workplaces Scale:

1. The staff I work with treat me with respect
2. I am respected for my skills and experience
3. My work is appreciated and acknowledged
4. My role is valued within my work area
5. Communication between management and staff is open and transparent
6. Staff are informed in a timely manner about changes that may affect their performance, job or future
7. Problems are managed in a timely and appropriate manner
8. Staff are treated fairly when mistakes are made
9. Work is allocated fairly
10. Considering all my efforts and achievements, I feel that I receive the respect I deserve at work