

to better understand and guide prevention efforts for these risks.

**B1.3 Injury and Employment Patterns Among Hispanic Construction Workers**—Hunting KL, Anderson JTL, Welch LS

Medical record data were analyzed to compare injury patterns among 3,290 injured Hispanic, black, and white construction workers treated at the George Washington University emergency department from 1990 to 1998. Initially, we observed that Hispanics had a higher proportion of serious injuries and hospitalizations than blacks and whites. However, injured Hispanic workers were disproportionately employed as laborers and in other less-skilled trades.

Construction tasks and injury risk factors vary considerably between trades. Since trade and ethnicity are strongly linked, any evaluation of ethnicity's role in work-related injury must therefore try to separate the risk associated with trade. Laborers and carpenters had enough injuries for within-trade comparison of injured whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Differences between ethnic groups in diagnoses, circumstances, hospitalization, and recommended time off and light duty largely disappeared after controlling for trade.

Interviews conducted several weeks post-injury indicated that a smaller proportion of injured Hispanic workers belonged to a union and reported that anything could have been done to prevent their injury, as compared to black and white workers. Interviews conducted one year post-injury revealed that a larger proportion of injured Hispanic workers took time off work and that the duration of the time off was three to four times longer than for other injured workers. Also, the physical, financial, and emotional consequences were more apparent one year later for injured Hispanics, even after controlling for trade.

These observations suggest that minority status is a predictor of trade, and trade is a predictor of injury risk. Once injured, Hispanic workers may be disadvantaged in terms of health and employment options; further research is needed to explain these findings. In addition to reducing injury hazards, interventions should address the limited employment, union membership, and training options that are available to minority workers.

**B1.4 Workers With Disabilities**—Pransky GS, Blanck P

Individuals with disabilities constitute a sizeable portion of the workforce and represent the majority of working-age persons who are unable to work. Historically, barriers to employment have included attitudinal discrimination by employers, lack of workplace accommodations, and inadequate job training. The disability rights movement has achieved considerable success in promoting legislation to

remove these barriers and uphold equal employment. Research suggests that many employers actively attempt to incorporate persons with disabilities into the workforce and gain substantial economic benefit from their participation, without incurring burdensome expenses. Occupational health providers are asked by employers and others to provide input on feasibility and safety, a difficult task given the lack of scientific study on the occupational abilities and risks associated with specific disabilities. The limited amount of data available suggests that an excess risk for persons with disabilities cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty for most jobs. Thus, more research is needed to understand the actual nature and magnitude of risks due to disabilities, effectiveness and costs of accommodations, and persistence of discrimination.

**Session: B2.0**

**Title: New Developments With ROPS for Tractors**

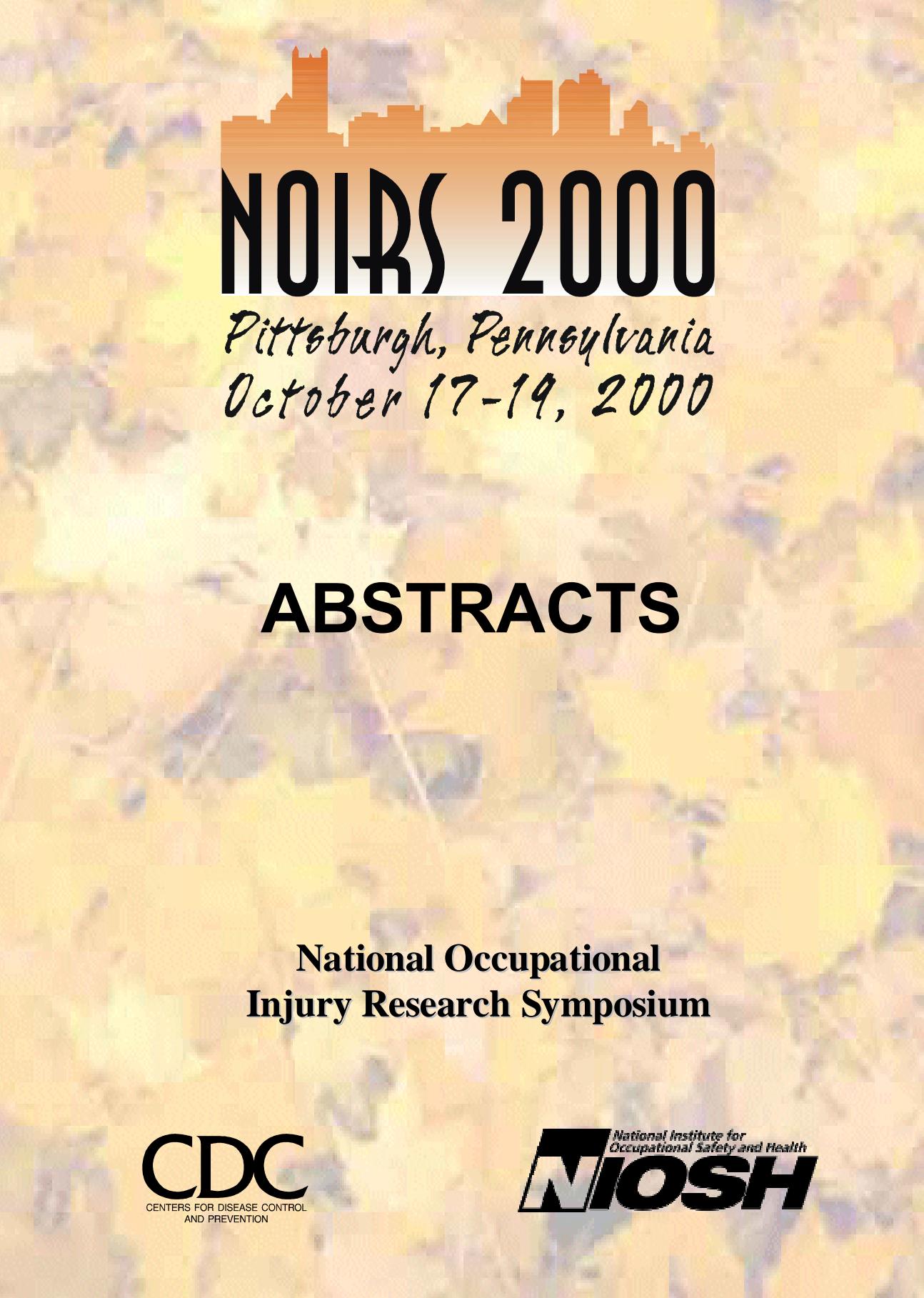
Category: Special Session

Organized by Dennis Murphy, Penn State University and John Etherton, NIOSH

Moderator(s): Dennis Murphy and John Etherton

**B2.1 Policy Toward Increasing ROPS Use**—Myers ML

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health convened a National Tractor Risk Abatement and Control: The Policy Conference in 1997. Forty participants at this conference agreed on 25 action items to reduce tractor-related injuries that account for about 270 deaths annually. If these action items are implemented, 2,000 lives could be saved by 2015. Twelve of these action items relate to the policy question, "How do we assure that every tractor that needs a ROPS, has one?" The action items include the development of an educational/social-marketing program to change social norms regarding ROPS and monitoring and regularly publishing tractor injuries. They also include establishing a tax rebate or subsidy program for retrofit ROPS installation, promoting the development of incentive programs such as certified safe farms, and finding ways to limit liability risks for ROPS manufacturers, dealers, and installers. The participants agreed that a research program needs to be established to design ROPS for pre-ROPS tractors and for work environments with low clearances. The participants also agreed that starting in 2003 but before 2015, that a sequence of public actions were needed in the following order: that all tractors have a ROPS if operated by persons under the age of 18 years, all tractors sold must be equipped with an approved ROPS, a recycling/removal program for tractors not appropriate a ROPS retrofit, all tractors operated on public roads have an approved ROPS, ROPS be installed on all tractors for which approved ROPS are available, and all tractors be equipped with approved ROPS.



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## ABSTRACTS

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