

Commentary

Introduction to the Collection on Research to Practice in the Construction Industry

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In this issue of the American Journal of Industrial Medicine, we present a collection of peer-reviewed articles that describe a Research to Practice (r2p) program developed at CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training. As described in more detail in the paper by Baker and colleagues [Baker, 2015], evidence-based interventions exist that can prevent deaths, injuries and illnesses, but reliance on passive diffusion too often has failed to get these tools or work practices into the hands of those who need to take action on the findings. Movement from health and safety research findings to effective practice is particularly important in the construction industry, where a disproportionate number of workers are injured or made sick each year in the United States. The six papers presented here discuss key components of the r2p program and focus on high-priority areas such as falls and ergonomics, as well as promising translation and dissemination methods that have been used successfully in construction, including partnerships and technology transfer.

Baker et al [Baker, 2015] provide an introduction to the topic of r2p and describe the conceptual models used to develop CPWR's program. They go on to describe a systematic method developed for identifying, prioritizing and following through on research findings that are ready for broad dissemination and adoption.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships have been considered to play an important role in public health translation and dissemination, as described in the second paper in the series by Chang and colleagues [Chang, 2015]. Since little is

known about how such partnerships function in occupational health and safety, the authors undertook an in-depth review of a partnership that was started in the 1990s and has directly influenced the development of several successful innovations to improve health and safety. Lessons are outlined for future partnerships interested in promoting innovation and best practices in occupational safety and health (OSH).

Technology transfer describes the process of moving from bench research to the marketplace and then to full dissemination of inventions. To better understand the role of technology transfer as part of r2p in the construction industry, CPWR sponsored a symposium with industry stakeholders to identify drivers and barriers to successful technology transfer. Findings from that symposium are presented in a paper by Welch and colleagues [Welch, 2015] and have led to several new resources for researchers.

Falls are a leading cause of death and nonfatal injury among construction workers. Two papers in this collection describe efforts to promote use of techniques known to prevent injuries from falls. A paper by Macario and colleagues [Macario, 2015] assesses engagement of partners in a national social marketing campaign to prevent falls in residential construction. Social marketing is an approach to dissemination that has been used increasingly in public health, but only to a limited extent in the OSH field. This paper contributes to an understanding of the greater role social marketing might play, as well as the importance of partner engagement in effective campaigns. The second falls paper, by Teran and colleagues [Teran, 2015], hones in on the challenges and opportunities for promoting fall protection for a population that is at the greatest risk, Latino construction workers. It presents results of focus groups and in-depth interviews with Latino workers and the primarily small contractors who employ them, as well as other key informants, and describes individual and contextual factors using a social ecological model.

The sixth paper in this series, by Boatman and colleagues [Boatman, 2015], presents results of focus groups and key informant interviews with construction

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workers contractors and union representatives in California, assessing knowledge and attitudes about ergonomics. It highlights the importance of framing issues in OSH in ways most likely to be received favorably by target audiences—those who must make the decisions to adopt evidence-based innovations.

We hope this collection of papers will enable the readers of the Journal to apply the lessons learned by CPWR over the past 4 years. Researchers around the world focusing on the construction industry, as well as the occupational safety and health community more broadly, are invited to use our findings and resources to enhance their own r2p efforts.

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