

# **WORK, STRESS, AND HEALTH 2009: GLOBAL CONCERNS AND APPROACHES**

**FINAL PROGRESS REPORT**  
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## **OVERVIEW ABSTRACT**

### **Background**

The American Psychological Association (APA), in collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP), convened the eighth international conference on occupational stress and health, **Work, Stress, and Health 2009: Global Concerns and Approaches**, at the Caribe Hilton Hotel, November 5-8, 2009, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Pre-conference workshops were held November 5, 2009.

This was the eighth time APA, NIOSH, and SOHP, this time along with the University of Puerto Rico, joined together to convene an international conference on occupational stress and health. The first workplace stress and health conference, **Work and Wellbeing: An Agenda for the 90s**, was held in November 1990 and attracted about 300 attendees. The widespread interest and need for further information evident at this conference convinced APA and NIOSH to continue the work and to convene the second conference, **Stress in the 90s: A Changing Workforce in a Changing Workplace**, in November 1992. It attracted approximately 700 individuals from nearly 2 dozen countries. The growing agenda around occupational stress and health evident from the second conference led APA and NIOSH to convene the third conference, **Work, Stress, and Health '95: Creating Healthier Workplaces**, in September 1995. Over 850 people attended from 20 countries. A fourth conference, **Work, Stress, and Health 99: Organization of Work in a Global Economy** was held March 11-13, 1999, at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland, with approximately 600 participants from 25 countries attending. The fifth conference, **Work, Stress, and Health: New Challenges in a Changing Workplace**, was held March 20-22, 2003, at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto, Ontario, with attendance of over 650 participants from 28 countries around the world. The sixth conference, **Work, Stress, and Health 2008: Making a Difference in the Workplace**, was held March 2-4, 2006, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Miami, Florida, with attendance of nearly 700 from 30 countries. The most recent seventh conference, **Work, Stress, and Health 2006: Healthy and Safe Work Through Research, Practice, and Partnerships**, was held March 6-8, 2008, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Attendance for this most recent conference was nearly 750 and attracted participants from 32 countries.

### **Conference Planning And Organization**

### **Major Themes**

01. **Global Issues and Concerns:** Job stress, risk factors, and interventions in developing countries; Emergent risk factors in developed regions; Government and NGO initiatives; National policies and guidelines; International networks and collaborations.
02. **Best Practices in Creating Healthy Workplaces:** Organizational, individual, and multilevel interventions; Policy and legislative developments; Organizational learning; Corporate social responsibility; Program evaluation studies; Model programs; Practitioner Tool-kits; Evidence-based practice; Challenges with small businesses.
03. **Collaborative and Participatory Approaches:** Labor-management initiatives; Government-Labor-Business-University-Community partnerships; National and international collaborations.
04. **Workplace Diversity, Minority and Immigrant Workers, Health Disparities :** Differential exposures and susceptibilities; Race/ethnicity-related stressors; Stress and immigrant status; Workplace multiculturalism; Culturally-tailored prevention and intervention programs; Discrimination (e.g., Gender, Age, Race/Ethnicity, Disability); Cultural competencies;
05. **Workplace Mistreatment: Sexual harassment;** Violence by customers, clients, patients, coworkers, etc.; Incivility; Violence prevention programs; Personal and organizational responses; Characteristics of perpetrators and victims.
06. **Changing Employment Arrangements:** Contract and temporary work; Self-employment; Under- and over-employment; Job insecurity; Psychological contracts; Part-time work.
07. **Human Resource Management and Benefits:** Health, pension, and other benefits; FMLA issues, Disability benefits; Pay equity and discrimination; Workers' compensation programs; Return to work; Job accommodations.
08. **Work Schedules:** Shift work; Overtime/extended hours of work; Flexible/compressed schedules; Schedule design; Telecommuting.
09. **Work and Family:** Work-family balance; Work-family conflict; Dependent care; Formal and informal family supports; Positive and negative spillover.
10. **Work Design and Worker Health:** Increased work pace; Lean production; Downsizing and resizing; Globalization; Outsourcing; Continuous improvement; Process engineering; Emerging technologies; Job and task design.
11. **Psychosocial Work Environment:** Worker control; Work pace and work overload; Physical demands; Organizational climate and culture; Social support; Supervision and leadership; Participative programs.
12. **High Risk Jobs and Populations:** Younger and older workers; Lower income workers; High risk occupations (e.g., agriculture, construction, emergency responders, health care, manufacturing, military, mining, transportation).
13. **Traumatic Stress and Resilience for Workers in Hazardous Occupations and Disaster Relief Operations:** Strategies for assessment, prevention, mitigation and treatment of traumatic stress; Assessing constructs of resilience applied to behavior and decision-making under duress.

14. **Psychological and Biological Effects of Job Stress:** Depression and stress; Musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and immune system function; Women's health concerns; Obesity; Alcohol and substance abuse; Physiological and psychological pathways to health outcomes.
15. **Sleep, Fatigue, and Work:** Effects of work schedules on sleep; Sleep disorders and medications; Health and productivity implications of sleep disruptions.
16. **Aging and Work Stress:** Job design for aging workers; Work capabilities and limitations; Attitudes toward aging workers; Implications of an aging workforce; Job retention and retraining; Disability management and accommodations; Health benefit implications.
17. **Health Services and Health and Productivity Management:** Health promotion; EAPs; Vocational rehabilitation; Career and work adjustment counseling; Return to work; Presenteeism; Absenteeism; Disability management; Stress management; Integrated prevention models.
18. **Building a Business Case for Workplace Safety & Health:** Social and economic costs of safety and health; Stress effects on performance, retention, and withdrawal; Productivity costs of poor workplace health and design.
19. **Safety Climate, Management, & Training:** Management commitment to safety; Safety motivation and leadership; Errors, near-misses, and micro-accidents; Hazard identification and elimination; Barriers to eliminating or mitigating workplace hazards.
20. **Professional and Educational Development:** Graduate and undergraduate training in Occupational Health Psychology; Teaching innovations; Employee training programs; Career development programs.
21. **Theoretical and Conceptual Issues in Job Stress:** Personal, organizational, and cultural antecedents of stress; Moderators of stress-outcome relationships; Measurement of stress; Theoretical developments.
22. **Research Methodology:** Innovative research designs; Mixed-method research; Multidisciplinary research; Measure development; Case studies; Econometric analysis; Culturally-competent methods.
23. **Improving Intervention Methods and Processes:** Field intervention design; Engaging organizations in safety and health issues; Barriers to safety and health initiatives; Gaining access to organizations; Disseminating research findings to organizations.
24. **National and International Surveillance (Tracking):** Hazard surveillance strategies, methods, and programs; Surveillance of stress and health; Current trends.
25. **Positive Psychology and the Workplace.**
26. **Emerging Risks, Opportunities, and Issues in Work, Stress, and Health.**

## **Conference Chairs and Planning Committees**

Conference Chairs:

Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, PhD  
American Psychological Association

Steven L. Sauter, PhD  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Robert R. Sinclair, PhD  
Society for Occupational Health Psychology

Ivonne Moreno-Velazquez, PhD  
University of Puerto Rico

Several other professionals in the field served on the Conference Consultant Committee, and the International Scientific Organizing Committee. These groups, in collaboration with the Conference Chairs, and Core Planning Committee, had the responsibility of planning the 2009 conference.

## **Collaborating Organizations**

Key professional associations and organizations were invited to join in the conference as collaborators. Collaborators were asked to send at least one representative to the conference at their own expense, assist in publicizing the conference, encourage members to attend and contribute, and facilitate the meeting in whatever ways possible. Collaborating organizations were listed in the conference program: American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Association of Virgin Islands Psychologists, Brazil Chapter of the International Stress Management Association, CN Occupational Health and Safety Research Centre, Communications Workers of America, Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology, Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, Interamerican Society of Psychology, International Labor Organization, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute of Occupational Health, Japan, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Pan American Health Organization, Ponce Catholic University, Puerto Rico Psychological Association, Universia Puerto Rico, University of Puerto Rico Department of Psychology, and World Health Organization.

## **Call for Papers and Proposal Selection**

Approximately 30,000 copies of the Call for Papers were distributed to professionals across disciplines and professional affiliations including attendees of previous conferences. Mailing lists were obtained based on suggestions from the Planning Committee as well as assistance from the Collaborating Organizations. The deadline for

the receipt of paper, poster, and symposium proposals was March 16, 2009.

Over 700 proposals were received. Paper, poster, and symposium proposals were sent to three impartial reviewers for anonymous review. A special subgroup of the Conference Planning Committee convened in June 2009 to make final decisions on papers, posters, and symposia to be accepted and to organize specific sessions (paper sessions, symposia, and posters) for the conference program. Several special sessions were developed to ensure that key topics were covered by leaders in the field and were adequately represented. Moreover, they ensured a balanced, structured program to meet the conference's objectives.

### **Pre-Conference Workshops**

Five pre-conference workshops were offered on diverse topics addressing occupational stress and workplace wellness, all 3 hours in length. The American Psychological Association's Committee on Continuing Education (CE) sponsored the sessions which enabled attendees to attain APA Continuing Education Credits. A separate fee was charged for each workshop. A total of 122 individuals participated in the 5 Continuing Education workshops.

## **CONFERENCE STRUCTURE AND HIGHLIGHTS**

The final conference program was composed of 93 paper and symposia sessions, and 218 poster presentations. Additionally, there were 7 special luncheon tutorials offered. Leading experts from 43 countries attended. The conference proper started early on Thursday evening, November 5, 2009, with a keynote address by Steven Greenhouse, author of "The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker," and the welcome and opening remarks were given by the Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, PhD (APA), Steven Sauter, PhD (NIOSH), Robert Sinclair, PhD (SOHP), and Ivonne Moreno-Velazquez, PhD (UPR). Special welcomes were given by Carol Goodheart, PhD (APA President), and Dr. Lorenzo Gonzalez Feliciano, Secretary of the Puerto Rico Health Department. Two Poster Sessions with accompanying receptions were held, one each on Friday and Sunday mornings. The conference concluded with a reception which was preceded by an address from a panel of experts on the economic aspects of work stress, the theme of the 2011 conference. Several awards were presented at the conference, including a Career Achievement Award, an Intervention Evaluation Award, an Award for the Best Paper in the Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, and a Student Award.

### **Attendance**

Over 35,000 Conference Registration Brochures were distributed to potential conference attendees. Nearly 800 people attended the conference, representing mental health, federal government, human resources, occupational safety and health, labor, management,

employee assistance personnel, private industry, and policy development professionals. The conference had a large international component including leading experts from 43 countries, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela.

The international interaction facilitated networking collaborations and the continued development of a global network of occupational stress and workplace wellness specialists.

## **CONFERENCE EVALUATION**

A Conference Evaluation Tool was developed to determine the overall effectiveness and usefulness of the conference. Evaluation forms were distributed in the registration packets. Attendees were asked to respond to a number of questions related to the format, content, and performance of the conference as a whole.

The questionnaire was divided into sections that addressed various aspects of the conference. Most of the sections were constructed in a ranking format, wherein attendees

6 were asked to rank the content of the conference, the participant benefits of the conference, the program and facilities, and the logistics. Other sections featured short answer questions that addressed participants' conference expectations as well as queries as to their discipline, affiliation, and past conference attendance. At the end of the evaluation, there was a space where respondents could add any other comments. The majority of the participants appeared to be generally satisfied with the conference.

### **Conference Evaluation Questionnaire:**

The following is a summary of the responses to the Conference Evaluation Tool. Time and space constraints prevent an exhaustive listing of responses.

	Low or <u>Poor</u>	Fair	Ade- <u>quate</u>	Very <u>Good</u>	High or <u>Excellent</u>
<b>CONTENT</b>					
1. Completeness of coverage	3%	5%	32%	<b>42%</b>	18%
2. Range of program topics	5%	0%	29%	<b>45%</b>	21%
3. Substance of information presented	3%	8%	21%	<b>50%</b>	18%
4. Overall quality of sessions	3%	8%	18%	<b>53%</b>	18%
5. Opportunity for questions	8%	18%	24%	<b>37%</b>	13%
6. Opportunity for networking	3%	5%	13%	<b>47%</b>	32%
7. Range of continuing education (CE) topics	0%	0%	10%	<b>74%</b>	16%
8. Overall quality of CE offerings	0%	3%	13%	<b>71%</b>	13%
9. Overall conference rating	3%	3%	24%	<b>46%</b>	24%

**PARTICIPANT BENEFITS**

10. Sessions challenged my thinking	3%	5%	<b>39%</b>	37%	16%
11. I gained insight relevant to my work	3%	5%	26%	<b>40%</b>	26%
12. Understanding of key matters was enhanced	3%	11%	26%	<b>42%</b>	18%
13. I learned new applications	0%	10%	<b>42%</b>	32%	16%

**PROGRAM AND FACILITIES**

14. Conference length	0%	3%	16%	<b>47%</b>	34%
15. Adequacy of facilities	3%	3%	20%	32%	<b>42%</b>
16. Timing of Announcement	3%	3%	23%	<b>42%</b>	29%
17. Accuracy of promotionals	0%	0%	15%	<b>74%</b>	11%
18. Registration fees	0%	21%	<b>45%</b>	26%	8%
19. Meeting rooms	3%	5%	16%	<b>55%</b>	21%
20. Conference organization	3%	3%	12%	<b>45%</b>	37%
21. Number of Plenary sessions	8%	5%	<b>39%</b>	32%	16%
22. Number of Panel sessions/symposia	3%	3%	23%	<b>53%</b>	18%
23. Poster sessions	0%	5%	37%	<b>40%</b>	18%
24. Conference receptions	0%	8%	26%	<b>45%</b>	21%

25. There were 8 competing paper panel/symposia sessions in each time block during the 2008 meeting. What is your preference regarding the number of competing panel/symposia sessions in each time period? There should be \_\_\_\_ competing panel/symposia sessions in each time period. (Choice of 1 through 10)  
The large majority of responses indicated between **4 and 6 competing sessions**.

26. What is your preference regarding the number of non-competing (i.e. plenary) poster sessions during the entire meeting? There should be \_\_\_\_ non-competing poster sessions during the meeting. (Choice of 0 through 5)  
The large majority of responses indicated between **2 and 4 non-competing sessions**.

27. The poster sessions at the 2008 meeting presented different posters in each session. The poster session venue would have needed to be twice as large to accommodate all the posters in both sessions and to permit all the posters to be displayed longer. Assuming that posters will continue to be arranged in the room by topic or theme, what is your preference regarding the duration of the display of the posters and the overall size of each poster session?

1	2	3	4
each poster displayed throughout the meeting in a venue with 200 or more posters	each poster displayed for about half of the meeting, in a venue with 100 or more posters	each poster displayed for one day of the meeting with up to about 75-100 posters	each poster displayed during one session of the meeting with about 50-75 posters

The large majority of responses indicated **Option 3**.

28. Some participants have suggested that we offer continuing education credits for many of the presentations during the actual conference, instead of the current practice of CE credits for the preconference day, only. Please indicate your preferences regarding the availability of Continuing Education credits at the conference:

1	2	3	4
CE credits in the pre-conference day only	CE credits available in a few topic areas for most of the conference	CE credits available for several selected professions for most of the conference	CE credits available for as many different sessions and as many different professions as can be accommodated in the conference

The large majority of responses indicated **Option 2, with Option 3 closely following**.

29. If CE credits were supported in more sessions of the conference, would you be willing to pay a slightly higher conference registration fee that would permit all conference attendees access to any of the CE credit sessions?

	1	2	3	4
Yes		yes, if the increased conference fee is a very small increase	no, the attendees interested in the CE credits should cover any additional costs	no, the conference registration fees are already too high and should be lowered for all attendees, including those receiving CE credits

The large majority of responses indicated **Option 3**.

### LOGISTICS / APA STAFF

	Low or <u>Poor</u>	Fair	Ade- <u>quate</u>	Very <u>Good</u>	High or <u>Excellent</u>
30. Staff was responsive and helpful	0%	0%	3%	42%	<b>55%</b>
31. Enrollment was smooth and efficient	0%	0%	3%	31%	<b>66%</b>

***Question: What would you consider the BEST aspects of the conference?***

COMMENTS (representative sampling)

- Chances to network
- Range and quality of topics and presenters
- Organization
- Presentations given at plenary and topical panel sessions
- Depth and breadth of work/stress topics presented
- International representation
- Interdisciplinary nature of the conference
- Special lunch presentations

***Question: What suggestions would you offer for improving the conference?***

COMMENTS (representative sampling)

- Later submission dates/more refined submission process
- Additional/more space for posters
- Additional time for sessions
- Provide for conference follow-up activities allowing presenters to continue interacting with conference organizers
- Scale back conference; less topics will foster interaction among participants
- Hold conference more frequently
- Strictly hold presenters to their time limits

***Question: Did the conference meet your expectations?***

The large majority of responses indicated **Yes**.

To determine the range of disciplines and affiliations represented at the conference, we asked respondents to indicate their professional disciplines and major affiliations. A representative breakdown of professional disciplines and affiliations follows:

**Professional discipline**

- Nursing
- Epidemiologist
- Licensed Professional Counselor
- Occupational Medicine
- Psychologist
- Labor Leader
- Physician
- Policy Maker
- Public Health Specialist
- Social Worker

**Major affiliation**

- Private Corporation
- University
- Hospital
- Labor Industry
- Public Industry
- Government Agency
- Nonprofit Organization
- Private Practice

***Question: Have you attended previous work and stress conferences?***

The large majority of responses indicated that many respondents had attended previous conferences.

***Question: Did you access the conference homepage on the World Wide Web? If so, please provide your opinions of the homepage and any suggestions you may have for improving it.***

The large majority of responses indicated **YES**.

COMMENTS (representative sampling)

- Difficult to find from main APA webpage
- Start online registration sooner
- Was well organized and useful
- Make more user friendly

**General**

COMMENTS (representative sampling)

- Please feature some plenary sessions on global/international issues
- Session chairs needs to be more disciplined in their time management of sessions
- This conference has been a major factor in helping advance the field
- Please continue to plan and hold this conference
- Set up alternate hotels for conference attendees at special rates
- Continue to stress the international aspect of the conference

## **OUTCOMES/RELEVANCE/IMPACT AND FUTURE ACTION**

Respondents seemed very satisfied with the conference and expect it to be offered again. The APA/NIOSH/SOHP team was joined for this conference by the University of Puerto Rico and the dynamic proved to be very effective and efficient. Even before the 2009 conference began, discussions concluded and planning commenced for the next conference, which will be held May 19-22, 2011 in Orlando, Florida at the DoubleTree Hotel. The title of the ninth international conference on occupational stress and health is **Work, Stress, and Health 2011: Work and Well-Being in an Economic Context.**