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Periodicals](#)
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Development](#)
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Meetings](#)
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[Browse by Program](#)
[Author Index](#)
[Affiliation Index](#)
[Disclosure Index](#)
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### 282260 Safe patient handling activities in Massachusetts hospitals

*Wednesday, November 6, 2013 : 10:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.*

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**Background:** According to the Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, the rate of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) among Massachusetts hospital workers (1.3 cases/100 FTEs) is almost twice the national rate. Previous studies show that safe patient handling (SPH) programs effectively reduce patient handling injuries and MSDs among direct care staff. To obtain baseline information about current SPH programs and inform prevention efforts, we conducted the *Survey of Hospital Based Safe Patient Handling Activities*. **Methods:** The 31 question survey, adapted from a Washington State survey, was mailed to occupational health professionals at all 98 hospitals licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Descriptive analysis and stratification by hospital characteristics was performed. **Results:** The 88 responding hospitals were similar to all hospitals with respect to size and teaching status. Forty-three percent of hospitals reported having a SPH policy. More than half (65%) of the hospitals reported having a committee/group working to prevent patient handling injuries, 18.8% reported having neither. Respondents listed perceived increase in time, difficulty for staff to break habits, and cost of equipment as the most important barriers to addressing SPH. Occupational health professionals reported the survey enhanced the discussion of SPH activities. **Conclusion:** The survey methodology, including direct follow-up with hospitals, resulted in a high response rate and allowed for representative overviews of SPH programs. While most hospitals are addressing the hazard of patient handling, the survey identified needed improvements, including expanding the number of hospitals with SPH policies and committees and increasing the frequency of SPH training.

#### Learning Areas:

Occupational health and safety

#### Learning Objectives:

Describe the incidence of musculoskeletal claims in Massachusetts. Characterize Safe Patient Handling programs in Massachusetts.

**Keyword(s):** Ergonomics, Health Care Workers

#### Presenting author's disclosure statement:

**Qualified on the content I am responsible for because:** during the past year I have gained extensive knowledge of ergonomics issues and safe patient handling practices in hospitals. I have applied this knowledge to this analysis.

**Any relevant financial relationships?** No

I agree to comply with the American Public Health Association Conflict of Interest and Commercial Support Guidelines, and to disclose to the participants any off-label or experimental uses of a commercial product or service discussed in my presentation.

Back to: **5127.1: Healthcare: Occupational Health and Safety**


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