Welcome to the Society for Occupational Health Psychology Newsletter!

Society for Occupational Health Psychology

Welcome to the Winter (v.22) edition of the Newsletter for the Society for Occupational Health Psychology. This newsletter begins with a column from SOHP President Tammy Allen and President Elect Christopher Cunningham about strategic initiatives and objectives set forth for the Society.

We have some exciting news to share from the recent Work, Stress, and Health conference that includes the 2019 SOHP Service Award and an announcement on the inaugural recipient of this new award.

We share a summary of the findings from the recently conducted SOHP Membership Survey. These findings include challenges associated with translation of OHP research into practice, suggestions on how to meet the needs of OHP researchers, graduate students, early-career scholars, and more.

In the Practitioner's Corner, we have a column written by Dr. Adam Staten about burnout and the individual and broader impacts burnout can have. Dr. Adam Staten is a general practitioner from the United Kingdom; he has worked as the Medical Director for MKGP Federation, and as of September 2019, assumed the role as MKGP Chair.

Looking back at 2019, accolades go to the organizations who were selected for the 2019 APA Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards. Selectees underwent a rigorous evaluation process that assessed their workplace practices in employee involvement, health and safety, employee growth and development, work-life balance, employee recognition and communication. For a listing of award recipients visit: https://www.apaexcellence.org/awards/ and learn how you can apply for future Psychologically Healthy Workplace Awards.

We wish you Happy Holiday, a Healthy New Year, and Thank You for all you have done and continue to do as we unite together and lead the way in sustaining health, safety, and worker well-being.

If you have any comments or would like to write an article for a future issue, please reach out and let us know:

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Inside this issue

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SOHP President's Column

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Hello! Another great Work, Stress and Health (WSH) conference is in the books. It is always energizing and inspiring to hear the latest research, see old friends and make new ones, and contemplate ways we can help advance worker health, safety, and wellbeing. A big thanks to everyone involved in planning the conference as well as to those who reviewed, submitted, and presented. It was also excellent to see so many first-time attendees at the WSH event and we hope everyone will make plans to attend the 2021 event in Miami, Florida.

Every WSH conference presents an opportunity for us to reflect on the status and impact of our society, the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP). The SOHP organization is still a relatively young one, formed in 2005. Despite our adolescent status, we have a strong membership base, solid financial situation, our own journal, a forthcoming book series, ongoing newsletter, and an expanding social media presence. We also have maintained and continue to grow strong and meaningful partnerships with other professional organizations in this space, including the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Institutes for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). These three organizations (APA, NIOSH, and SOHP) coordinate the biennial WSH conference. Extending from all of this, we are pleased to report that SOHP is strong and stable. Now is the time to build on this strong foundation.

Over the past year, the SOHP leadership team has been taking stock of where we are as a society. Earlier this year, we conducted a comprehensive member survey; thank you to those of you who responded. More information about the survey, including some of the findings are presented elsewhere in this newsletter. Understanding your needs and opinions is paramount to our work as we continue to shape SOHP into a professional society that provides you with real value and helps to amplify and support your work in occupational health, safety, and well-being. Building on this survey, the SOHP executive committee is currently engaged in a strategic plan-

ning process. As part of this process we are reviewing our mission, objectives, and infrastructure, as well as developing a prioritized set of initiatives for the coming years.

For example, we know we have work to do to improve our membership communication and renewal process. We appreciate your understanding as we dealt with some hiccups in that system earlier this year. We know that we want to better reach, serve, and engage practitioners. This is a work in progress. We have many ideas on the table on how we can increase member engagement, better serve members, and extend our outreach to those in the occupational health community.

SOHP has room to grow. We are dedicated to continuing to position SOHP as a leading professional organization that helps to advance worker health, safety, and well-being. We are both sincerely excited about the future of our society and we hope you are as well. We really need your help to continue the great progress SOHP is making. As a volunteer organization with no administrative staff, all of the work and impact of SOHP comes through the efforts of committed and dedicated members. This is one of the primary ways we keep our membership dues so low. However, it also makes it all the more important that we have engaged members who can help champion and advance initiatives. It is easy to get involved. If you are interested in getting involved with SOHP operations at some level, email either one of us (tallen@mail.usf.edu, Chris-Cunningham@utc.edu) or our Membership Committee Chair, Songqi Liu (sqliu@gsu.edu). We want to hear from you!

Congratulations to Dr. Janet Barnes-Farrell on Receiving the 2019 SOHP Service Award

This past year, the Society of Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP) Executive Committee created a new award nomination and evaluation process open to our members. The SOHP Service Award recognizes individuals who have made sustained and meaningful contributions to the society. Nominations were due this past August and we presented this award during the SOHP business meeting at the 2019 Work, Stress, and Health conference this past November. We are delighted to announce that our inaugural award winner was Dr. Janet Barnes-Farrell (University of Connecticut).

Dr. Barnes-Farrell has been involved with SOHP since its inception in 2003. She started out as Secretary (2004-2005), and then became Secretary-Treasurer (2006-2008) when that position evolved to include both roles. She then served in the 6-year rotation through the presidential roles of President-Elect (2008-2009), President (2010-2011), and Past President (2012-2013).

In addition to these officer roles, she also served as the SOHP newsletter production editor from 2007-2010 and the SOHP webmaster from 2004-2017. In particular, her role as webmaster is noteworthy in terms of length of service and the impact on our society. She shepherded the website through multiple server transitions and has recently shared the history of the website's evolution with the SOHP Executive Committee to help us create and execute a solid communication strategy for the future of SOHP. Given the SOHP website is our face to the world, ensuring that the website is both aesthetically pleasing and up-to-date is extremely important. Therefore, SOHP extends our sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. Barnes-Farrell for her thirteen years of service in these various roles.

Do you know someone who is also deserving of this award? Please consider nominating them in the future! We are excited to continue recognizing individuals for this award at future conferences, so please consider responding to calls for nominations in 2021 during our next business meeting at the Work, Stress, & Health Conference (Miami, FL). The nominee must be a member of SOHP and nominations must be submitted by a current member of SOHP. Nominations should include the following items: a cover letter that briefly discusses the key contributions of the nominee to SOHP; two supporting letters from SOHP members; and a current curriculum vita of the nominee.

Larissa K. Barber, PhD

Lisa M. Kath, PhD

San Diego State University

Pictured:
2019 SOHP Service Award Recipient, Janet Barnes-Farrell

Lisa Kath, SOHP Past President
Christopher Cunningham, SOHP President-Elect

2019 SOHP Membership Survey Overview

Songqui Liu, PhD

Georgia State University

To understand member needs and opinions, identify ways to sustain and improve the value of SOHP membership, and help guide SOHP Executive Committee's strategic planning, we conducted a survey with our current and past members in June, 2019. In total, 82 responses were returned, from both current (76%) and past (24%) members. Among the respondents, 73% identified primarily as an occupational health and/or safety researcher, 24% identified as both an occupational health and/or safety researcher and practitioner, and 3% identified primarily as an occupational health and/or safety practitioner. Most of them are either in early (establishment) career stage (40%) or mid-to-late career stage (40%). In this brief report, I will summarize the main findings from ratings of quantitative items in the survey. This report is then complemented by reports from several teams conducting qualitative analyses on open-ended questions in the survey.

- The majority of SOHP members are either "satisfied" (41%) or "somewhat satisfied" (39.02%) with their SOHP membership. They have also shown strong interest in promoting the society, with 79% of the respondents either "absolutely likely" or "very likely" to suggest SOHP as a professional society to others interested in occupational health and safety.

- Clearly, developing and sustaining professional relationships is the most important benefit of the SOHP membership. In addition, online access to occupational health psychology journals (JOHP and OHS), a discounted rate to the Work, Stress, and Health conference, and supporting OHP in general are also recognized by members as priority benefits.

- Most of our members are satisfied with SOHP social and professional networking opportunities at conferences (SIOP and Work, Stress and Health), although there is clearly room to improve, as 32% of the respondents "neither agree nor disagree" with the statement "I am satisfied with SOHP social and professional networking opportunities at conferences (SIOP, Work, Stress, Health)".

- A potential point of improvement identified by the survey is SOHP's website and social media presence, as only 46% of the respondents either "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" with the statement "I am satisfied with the SOHP website" and only 40% of the respondents either "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" with the statement "I am satisfied with SOHP social media presence". Interestingly, the most preferred channels of communication from SOHP are direct email (52%) or newsletter (27%), rather than LinkedIn group, Facebook, or Twitter (21% in total).

- Another opportunity for SOHP to better serve its members is to increase the awareness of and provide clear instructions for the online membership platform. Alarmingly, 15% of the respondents endorsed "I did not even know SOHP had an online membership platform I could use" and 18% of the respondents endorsed "I have not used it [SOHP online membership platform] at all".

- Satisfaction toward the SOHP newsletter, on the other hand, is much higher, as 65% of the respondents either strong agree or somewhat agree with the statement "I am satisfied with the SOHP newsletter."

In sum, the survey has provided useful and timely information on where our members stand on many areas of service provided by the society. We want to thank everyone for their participation. Hearing from you provides us with insights and motivation to continue our work. If you have further comments and suggestions, please feel free to contact us at membership@sohp.org.

2019 SOHP Membership Survey: Improvements to the SOHP Website, Newsletter, and Social Media Strategy

Background: This report focuses on three open-ended questions from the 2019 SOHP Membership Survey related to suggestions for improving the society's website, newsletter, and social media strategy (i.e., Facebook and Twitter). Three themes have been identified based on the comments from the survey. In addition to describing these three themes, we also provide a summary regarding trends across questions.

> **"What suggestions do you have for improving the SOHP Newsletter?"**
>
> **"What suggestions do you have for improving the SOHP website?"**
>
> **"What suggestions do you have for improving the SOHP social media strategy and/or posts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)?"**

Cat Huyen

Shalini Corzine

Larissa K. Barber, PhD

San Diego State University

Summary of Key Findings: A few themes were extracted through assessment of qualitative data provided by SOHP members for questions regarding ways in which we can regularly interact with our members (i.e., our website, newsletter, and social media strategy). The themes that were common across all three questions were a focus on:

- content,
- update frequency, and
- design/layout (newsletter and website only).

More specifically, many respondents indicated that they would like to have more resources and current content on the website related to new research results and grant information. Along with diversifying the content, members would like to see an increase in posted social media activity and more regular updates to the website. Lastly, members would like to see SOHP be more forward-facing by promoting themselves more in general through social media.

With regard to the newsletter, many members indicated that they do not receive the newsletter, and more marketing and distribution may help with keeping members connected to SOHP content. Additionally, SOHP members made several comments in regard to the design layouts for the website and newsletter. Based on their responses, members approve of the new updates to the website and newsletter, but would like to have the dates of the events and member contact list more easily accessible. The feedback from members is especially valuable in determining future changes to these three key methods of interacting with our members.

2019 SOHP Membership Survey: Opportunities to Enhance the Field of OHP

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Background

In order to inform future strategic planning, the SOHP member base was surveyed regarding opportunities to enhance the field. This report outlines common themes identified from responses to five open-ended questions that pertained to challenges associated with translation of OHP research into practice, suggestions on how to meet the needs of OHP researchers, and ideas with regard to how SOHP could be more attractive to graduate students and early-career scholars.

To prepare this report, members of the authorship team sorted responses into themes. Themes are organized by question, and member comments are provided to illustrate each theme. Members' comments are written verbatim, with the exception of grammatical corrections. Summary conclusions are provided.

Key overall findings: Across the five open-ended questions, respondents noted the importance of greater funding opportunities and funding information, translation of information across science and practice, and a desire to increase organizational networking efforts.

Challenges or barriers in translating SOHP research into practice

Item: List the greatest challenges or barriers you believe exist when translating occupational health and/or safety research into practice.

Problems with Research
- Academic papers have little connection to practice.
- Inattention to practicality, utility, external validity, and generalizability in research.
- Time to conduct research showing the importance of occupational health interventions in practice.
- Sampling approaches used in research may not be representative, so we need better sampling and organizational partnerships/involvement in our research for it to be generalizable.

More Information and Data Needed on Approaches that Work
- Much of the research suggests individual-level solutions (e.g., employees should get more sleep, they should do things to recover more etc.). While this might offer helpful tips for employees, it doesn't point to system-wide change.
- The greatest challenge would probably be the level of specificity needed to appropriately translate OHP/safety research into practice. For example, what worked in one company or case study, or is recommended in research, may not work in all organizations. This is not surprising, though.
- Incomplete information/knowledge on phenomena and their effects. Limited appreciation and understanding of context and its impacts on phenomena. Lack of clear evidence of impact and reason to address a particular issue.

Organizational Resistance and Lack of Resources
- Lack of cost/benefit analysis.
- Employers/organizations largely consider it unimportant or only a secondary issue in their work.
- Leaders who prioritize capital over people. A societal level shift of power residing with workers to residing with the owners of capital.

Need to Make Business Case to Organizations
- Selling business leaders on the costs of poor worker health and well-being.
- Demonstrating a return on investment for occupational health and safety strategies.
- For me, it is having organizations realize the long-term benefits. Convincing them the investment in employee well-being is worth it and not just a frivolous expense.

More Connection Between Research and Practice
- One barrier may be a perceived divide between researchers and practitioners. Can we better connect members (working in similar fields both researches and practitioners) within the society?

- Bridging our use of theory and empirical data with what is actually happening on the ground in the organizations we seek to improve. Breaking down the 'ivory tower' perceptions and getting closer to the ground when putting our work into practice.
- Getting the research out to practitioners. Translating information and importance to management.

Increased Understanding and Communication
- Concrete and direct ideas/action steps that folks with little psychology background can understand, champion, and implement.
- Give most important details of the research-intervention to transfer a modeling for practitioners: a complex system in simple sentences to apply it in another complex system.

How SOHP can better meet the needs of occupational health and/or safety researchers

Item wording: What are some ways by which SOHP can better meet the needs of occupational health and/or safety researchers?

Financial Support through Grants and Information on Other Funding Sources
- Small grant opportunities for developing undergraduate training and research programs (e.g., seed funding to do an applied project in the community) to apply and study OHP in nontraditional, mixed-method contexts.
- Website links to funding resources.
- Connect researchers with funding opportunities.
- It would be useful if there was a pooled document detailing grants/awards that OHP/safety researchers have been successful in obtaining in the past.

Greater Social Network Development
- Initiating new partnerships with other professional and/or scientific societies in management or safety or health promotion. This would lead to greater awareness and integration and possibly expand education and training.
- Valorize the OHS research with other disciplines (engineering, ergonomics, etc.), and

organize meetings between practitioners and researchers.
- Help connect researchers with practitioners for partnership opportunities.
- Some way to find/contact a practitioner/expert near you to try and facilitate practice-research partnerships.

Improved Online Resources
- Access to data like Gerontologists have that anyone can access and evaluate across years.
- Perhaps helping people find public access data sets they could use to study OHP issues.
- Workshops/webinars on OHP theory and methods.

Increased Knowledge Transfer Opportunities
- Continue to provide opportunities to share work through conferences, journals, books, etc.
- Some knowledge mobilization opportunities for researchers with a wide range of audience (webinar?).
- More pedagogical tools as films, posts, exercises, discussion questions, etc. and more textbooks of different levels.
- Greater reach out.

More Training Opportunities
- Methodology workshops.
- Conference sessions that aim to help PhD students and junior faculty in developing research ideas, manuscripts, etc. grouped by research topics.
- Provide mentoring on grant application and management. Organize paper development workshops.

How SOHP can enhance OHP research

Item wording: What is the most effective way SOHP could enhance research on promoting worker health, safety, and well-being?

Financial Support through Grants and Information on Other Funding Sources
- Become a clearinghouse for funding sources.
- Research funds and awards.
- Perhaps give scholarships to grad students? Support students doing research to attend conferences.

- Collect and disseminate information on federal grants that OHP people can apply for.

Identification of Pressing Needs
- Perhaps a top-10 issues and opportunities list.
- Helping researchers figure out/hear about the most pressing needs in practice.
- Helping to make general statistics widely known to the research community (e.g., accident statistics, results of national polls on OHP-related issues) could help focus research on the most pressing problems.

Increased Visibility of OHP Ideas, Findings, and Experts
- Targeted media outreach and efforts to get SOHP members in the public eye.
- Strategically promote SOHP members to become journal editors and editorial board members.
- Be on the public place, speaking with large communities! Listening and talking about the workers' needs!

Greater Social Network Development
- Networking with not only health and safety professionals, but human resources and corporate managers.
- Help make research-practice collaborations. This could be a session at WSH (like a speed dating thing, except for research) or a collaboration of some kind or even a directory of data and skills to do some matching?
- Networks: stronger, more varied, more impactful.

Improved Online Resources
- Put resources on website, such as known publicly available data related to health and well-being that students could use for their own research.
- Providing webinars about trend topics.
- Publicize links to organizations that care about the issues.

What SOHP can do to better attract graduate students

Item wording: What could SOHP do to be more attractive as a professional society for graduate students in relevant fields of study?

Decreased Conference Cost
- The cheaper the better! Work with WSH conference to make it even cheaper for students to attend (e.g., sign a contract with a nearby, less expensive hotel--I think AOM does this).
- Free membership?
- I am especially happy to see the very reasonable price for students and will encourage my incoming students to join.

Financial Support via Grants
- Scholarships aimed at graduate students.
- Graduate student research support.
- Money! Scholarships, conference travel, etc.

Greater Interdisciplinary Focus
- Create and explicitly market events to build inter-disciplinary connections among grad students.
- Multidisciplinary research should be highlighted.

Development of Mentoring Program
- Mentor and shadowing opportunities both in research and practice.
- Create a mentor matching service.
- Offer mentoring opportunities with SOHP for graduate students.

Greater Within-SOHP Social Network Development
- Assist with networking.
- Continue to provide meet-ups and networking opportunities at other conferences such as SIOP. Offer mentoring opportunities with SOHP for graduate students.
- They already do a good job of having graduate student events (e.g., at SIOP), but more is always better for networking!
- Grad student groups.

Expansion of the SOHP Social Network
- Joint sponsors of conferences. Provide graduate training grants in relevant disci-

plines... public health, health education, occupational safety, ergonomics... even MBA?

- Partner with other organizations, such as AIHA, which has a more extensive network of student organizations.

Focus on Preparation for Job Market

- Reach out to terminal masters students. It seems as though most OHP programming for graduate students is aimed at doctoral students only. Terminal masters students are the practitioners not the researchers. They need training in OHP to address these issues in the workplace.
- Promote internship opportunities.
- Better support and networking opportunities for students on job market (e.g., student - mentor meeting sessions at conferences, job-search workshops, positions info at one place).
- Many grad students often seem intrinsically interested in it. They often do not see applied opportunities to work in it.

Targeted Marketing to Students

- Be clear about what SOHP offers to students/what they will get from the membership.
- Perhaps more use of social networking platforms to publicize SOHP.
- Update information (network opportunities, information about graduate programs, and short special courses).
- Continue student-focused programming at conferences... Outreach at the undergrad level PSY departments to help students understand what is possible.

What SOHP can do to better attract early-career researchers

Development of Mentoring Program

- Mentoring opportunities with other practitioners.
- Structured mentoring.

Greater Social Network Development

- Perhaps sponsor/brand some events at Work Stress and Health or similar conferences for early career professions - networking events or even a 1/2 day or day workshop for early career scholars.
- Develop 'special interest' subgroups with email lists and reserve time for each special interest group to meet at the WSH conference.
- Tools that allowed early career researchers to connect with other researchers/practitioners in their area for collaboration opportunities.
- Allow for collaboration and networking.

Reduction of 'Silos' within SOHP

- More involvement from senior researchers. It's supposed to be a society, but no one seems to want to associate and work with lower level people.
- It seems like SOHP is a bit clique-ish. The listserv helps to make it more inclusive, but even adjusting the website to highlight wider efforts might help.

Creation of 'Programs' Designed specifically to Assist Early-career Researchers

- Creating networking opportunities, perhaps an early career scholar program, similar to that of WFRN.
- Help ECRs with getting published and with finding data collection opportunities.
- Maybe a junior scholar consortium?

Financial Support through Grants and Information on other funding sources

- Small grant/seed-funding opportunities, including for research AND education. E.g., funding for local, community projects and outreach that also include opportunities to travel to and present at conferences.
- Funding opportunities for research available to early career researchers.
- Early career grants.

Improved Marketing

- Better website - Show connections to jobs via website.
- Perhaps advertising more in some way, or trying to target programs that do not formally have an OHP/safety specialization, but likely have researchers who fall

under these categories? I graduated with my PhD from an I/O program where there weren't any researchers who specifically identified as OHP or safety scholars, so I never knew about the field of OHP and the SOHP society. I only heard about SOHP through colleagues at other universities. Otherwise, I never would have known it existed.

Summary of trends across questions

A content analysis of the responses to each question demonstrates several key themes that consistently emerge. First, SOHP members have a desire for increased funding opportunities. Specifically, members would like to see more funding via SOHP-sponsored grants and through increased information on funding opportunities. Additionally, several comments referenced the potential for grant information to be housed on the SOHP website, which may be a route to ac-

complish the latter objective. Decreasing conference costs for graduate students and early-career researchers was also mentioned in several comments and could provide a financial incentive to grow membership and participation in SOHP. Second, members noted the importance of greater efforts toward translation of information across science and practice. This could be achieved through facilitation of more science-practice collaborations and increased communication and outreach with regard to effective evidence-based practices. Third, SOHP members report wanting increased networking opportunities. Based on the responses, networking opportunities within SOHP, with other professional organizations, and with practitioners would be welcomed. Additionally, targeted networking opportunities for graduate students and early career researchers was suggested. In a similar vein, a more formalized mentoring process may help increase the social ties for SOHP members.

2019 SOHP Membership Survey: Practitioner Needs

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Braden Sanford

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Christopher J.L. Cunningham, PhD

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Background
To inform future strategic planning, the SOHP member base was surveyed regarding opportunities to enhance its offerings particularly in ways that could better support the needs of OHP practitioners. This report summarizes common themes identified from SOHP member responses to three open-ended questions included in the 2019 SOHP Member Survey. Thematic distributions are organized by question, and example member comments are provided to illustrate each theme. Members' comments are written verbatim, with the exception of grammatical corrections. Summary conclusions are provided.

Methodology: Three separate coders reviewed the responses to each question in successive order. After reading each response to the question at hand, the first coder identified initial high-level themes in the comment. The second coder similarly read and assigned themes to the responses while simultaneous-
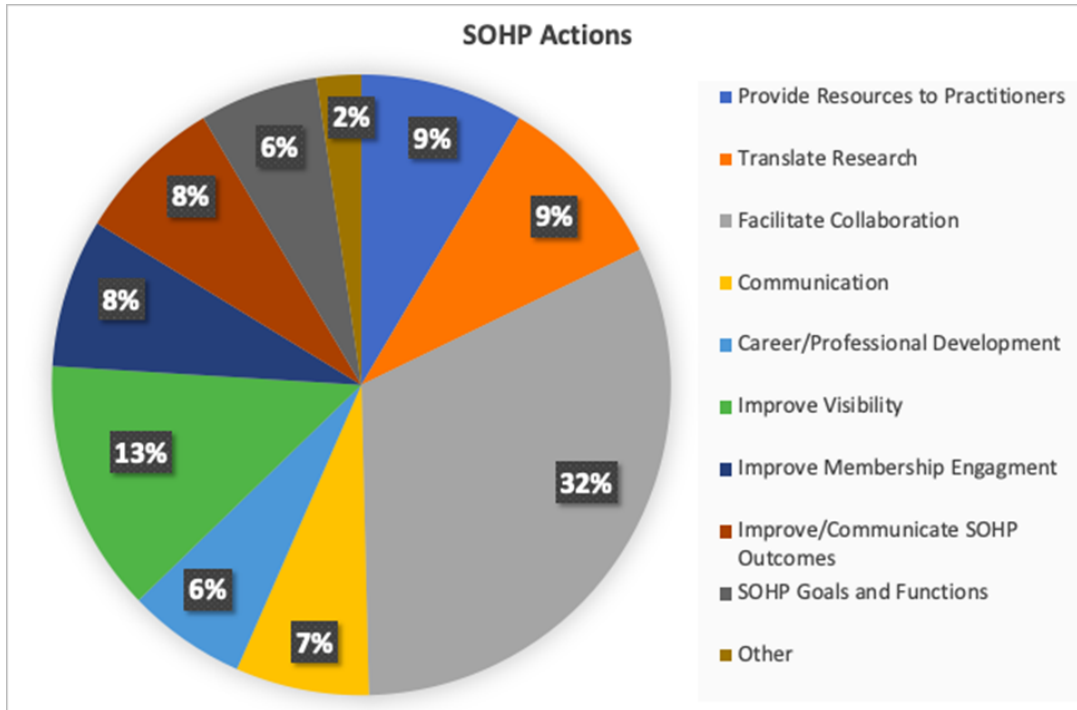
ly reconciling themes with the first coder's suggestions and adding new themes if necessary to capture the essence of any response elements. The third and final coder reconciled the themes assigned by the two initial coders, identified any missing themes, and provided a final consensus on relevant topics in each comment. Due to the open-ended nature of the questions, many member responses to these questions include multiple elements, each of which was coded for its independent value. For example, the coders identified themes of *Interdisciplinary Collaboration* and *Networking* from the comment "connect further with non-psychologist OSH practitioners" and *Networking, Providing Resources*, and *Scientist-Practitioner Gap* in the comment "I think it would be helpful if there were some recommendations/resources on connecting practitioners and academics/consultants with specific OHP areas." Second-order classifications were then created by grouping together similar themes into one overarching category.
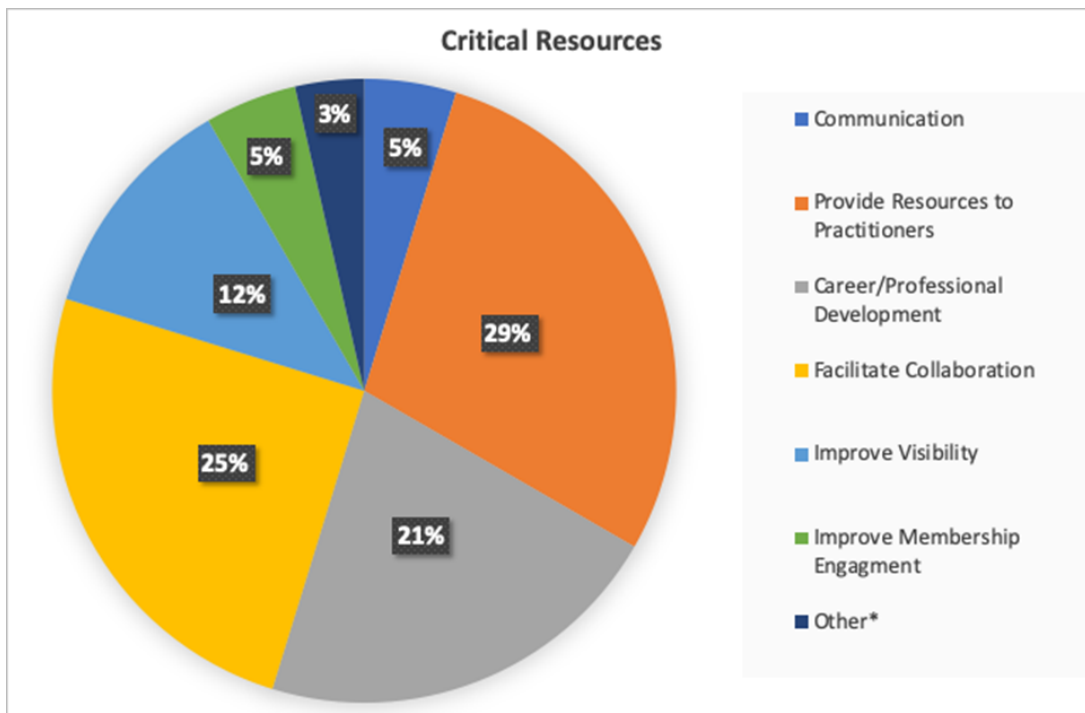
Findings: The findings from this analysis are summarized over the following pages. For each practitioner-focused survey question, a pie chart illustrates the main themes.
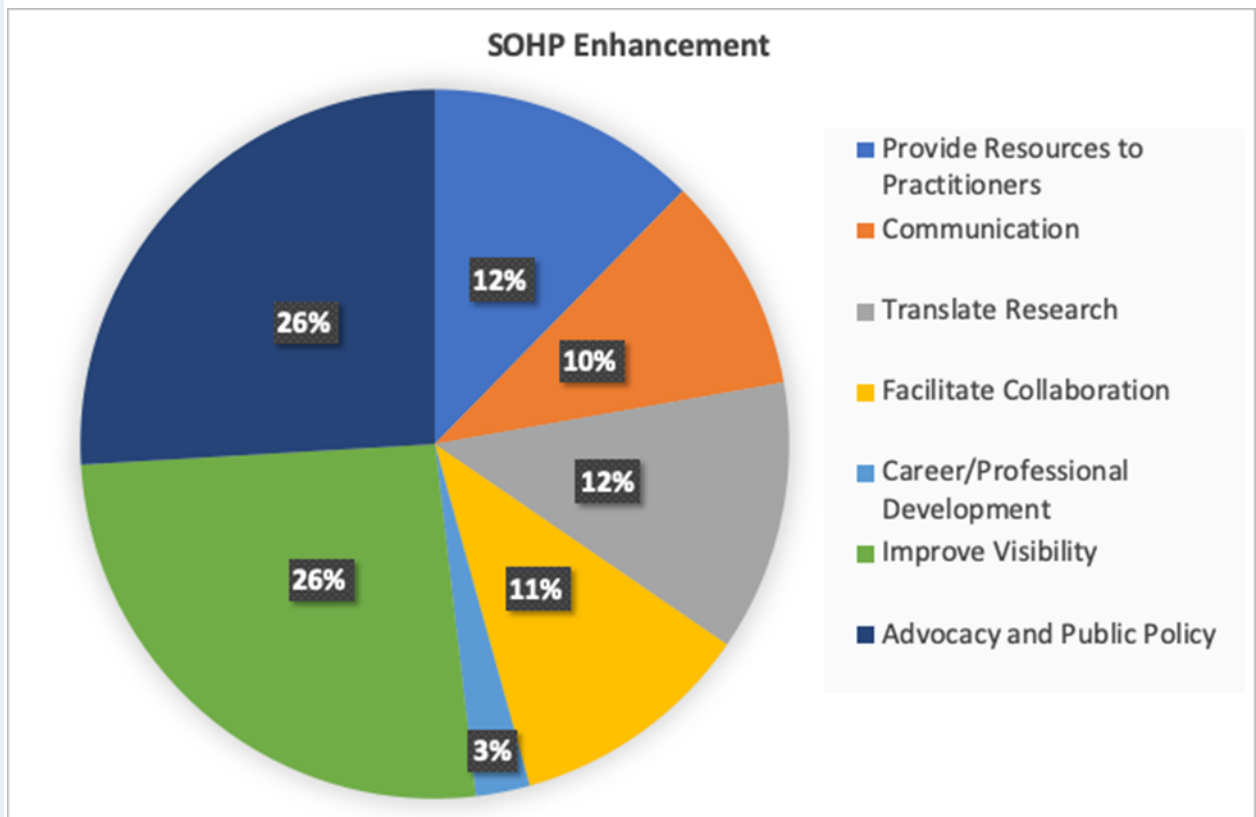
Survey Question: **What are the most important ways in which SOHP can better meet the needs of occupational health and/or safety practitioners?**

SOHP Actions

- Provide Resources to Practitioners — 9%
- Translate Research — 9%
- Facilitate Collaboration — 32%
- Communication — 7%
- Career/Professional Development — 6%
- Improve Visibility — 13%
- Improve Membership Engagment — 8%
- Improve/Communicate SOHP Outcomes — 8%
- SOHP Goals and Functions — 6%
- Other — 2%

Survey Question: **What are the most critical resources that would be valuable to develop and/or sustain the careers of occupational health and/or safety practitioners?**

Critical Resources

- Communication — 5%
- Provide Resources to Practitioners — 29%
- Career/Professional Development — 21%
- Facilitate Collaboration — 25%
- Improve Visibility — 12%
- Improve Membership Engagment — 5%
- Other* — 3%

Survey Question: **What is the most direct way you think SOHP could enhance the practice of promoting worker health, safety, and well-being?**

SOHP Enhancement

Legend:
- Provide Resources to Practitioners
- Communication
- Translate Research
- Facilitate Collaboration
- Career/Professional Development
- Improve Visibility
- Advocacy and Public Policy

Pie chart values: 12%, 10%, 12%, 11%, 3%, 26%, 26%

2019 SOHP Membership Survey: WSH and Volunteering

Nathaniel Chua

Evelyn Palafax

Zareena Shefa

Elizabeth Stewart

Christian Woodward

Lisa M. Kath, PhD

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Background

In order to inform future strategic planning, the SOHP member base was surveyed regarding challenges they experience with attending the Work, Stress, and Health conference and volunteering for SOHP. This report outlines common themes identified from responses to two open-ended questions. Themes are organized by question, and member comments are provided to illustrate each theme. Members' comments are written verbatim, with the exception of grammatical corrections. Some responses have been split because they encompass multiple themes. Only the appropriate portion of each comment will be included in its respective theme. Summary conclusions are provided.

Key findings: Across three open-ended questions, respondents noted that the timing and location of the conference, and financial cost were primary reasons as to why their attendance varied. Addi-

tionally, a lack of information and awareness prevents members from knowing what volunteer opportunities are available in SOHP.

Challenges or barriers hindering members' ability to attend the WSH conference

Item wording: What factors or reasons prevent you from attending the Work, Stress, and Health conference?
- Location
- Financial cost
- Date of conference
- Scheduling conflicts with other conferences

How SOHP can increase member involvement in Society activities

Item wording: What could SOHP do to help you be more involved in Society operations and functions?

- Clarify eligibility requirements
- Expand on information available for volunteer opportunities/positions
- Organization outreach
- Enhance availability of guidance and introductory materials for newer members

Summary of trends across questions

A content analysis of the responses to each question demonstrates several key themes that consistently emerge. These themes may be especially pertinent for the SOHP's strategic planning initiatives.

SOHP members find it difficult to locate the financial resources to attend the Work, Stress, and Health conference. It was found that member finances are often split between registration and travel. Members also prioritize conferences that align with their research interests. They note that consistent scheduling conflicts are often why they attend a different conference instead of WSH, should they manage to obtain the funding necessary to attend and travel. Members also report that the inconsistency in the date of the conference served as a barrier. The main challenge member's face is a funding issue, and, should they overcome it, may opt for a different conference due to scheduling conflicts.

SOHP members report a desire for more outreach. Member responses suggest that stronger outreach would help non-members join and renewing members stay by offering direct reminders about membership. Current members express a desire for more outreach regarding volunteer opportunities. The responses suggest that many members are unaware of volunteer opportunities because they are not advertised. For members aware of volunteer opportunities, a lack of eligibility requirements dissuades them from applying, as they are unsure of their chances of selection. Offering clear instructions through an increased amount of advertising may aid members in applying for volunteer opportunities at SOHP.

Burnout: An Individual and Systemic Threat

Burnout: An Individual and Systemic Threat
Burnout can be described as a triad of exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a lack of job satisfaction, with exhaustion usually being seen as the dominant feature. It results from prolonged periods of feeling emotionally overextended and, although it is seen in all kinds of workplaces, from financial services to professional sports, it is predictably most common in caring professions such as healthcare, teaching or social work.

People generally progress through three stages of burnout and, as they progress through these stages, the damage to their professional life, their personal life, and to their mental health tends to worsen. The first stage is 'stress arousal' during which time sufferers are exposed to occupational stress and start to experience poor concentration, irritability and anxiety alongside potential physical symptoms such as headaches and palpitations.

The second stage is 'energy conservation' during which sufferers try to find coping strategies for the stress. These coping strategies are often maladaptive and include things such as absenteeism and procrastination which offer only temporary relief, tending to worsen stress in the medium and long term. These efforts to cope may also include overeating, or alcohol and drug misuse and, in stressful work environments, substance misuse can be epidemic. For example, one study estimated that up to 21% of US physicians suffer with a substance misuse disorder (Oreskovich et al, 2015). This has a predictable impact on occupational and social functioning.

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The final stage of burnout is exhaustion and it is here that serious mental health problems such as depression and anxiety become entrenched. These problems may now be complicated by substance addiction. Suicidality is not uncommon with one Japanese study finding that over a fifth of psychiatric trainees had experienced active suicidal thoughts as a result of burnout (Tateno et al, 2018).

Burnout sufferers can thus find themselves caught in a downward spiral of increasing stress and decreasing ability to cope with that stress. Ultimately this is unsustainable and, unless the progress through these stages is checked, the sufferer will cease to function at work at all.

If an individual stops working within the system then the whole system potentially suffers. As the burnout sufferer stops working, their workload has to be taken up by their colleagues who are in turn exposed to more stress. In systems where burnout is common, healthcare systems being a prime example, burnout has potential to pose an existential threat to that system via a domino effect on the people working within it.

For this reason, burnout needs to be seen as a systemic problem demanding systemic solutions. Treating burnout as a problem suffered by individuals lays the search for a solution at the feet of the sufferer. However, an awareness that burnout is often a product of pressures generated by whole systems leads to a culture in which resilience measures can be built into the system which may safeguard both individuals and the system at large. Burnout should be seen by employers as an occupational hazard that needs to be mitigated as a matter of course, not as a mental health problem from which only susceptible individuals suffer.

References

Oreskovich et al (2015). The prevalence of substance use disorders in American physicians. Am J Addict. 2015 Jan;24(1):30-8

Tateno M et al (2018). Suicidal ideation and burnout among psychiatric trainees in Japan. Early Interv Psychiatry. 2018 Oct;12(5):935-937.

Book Announcement: Combatting Burnout—A Guide for Medical Students and Junior Doctors
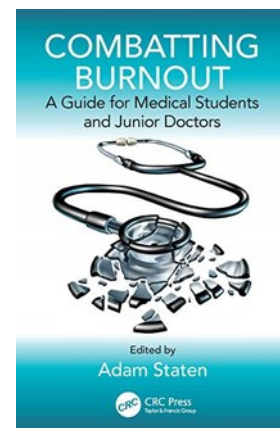
This timely aid, filled with 'down to earth' advice, provides invaluable guidance on avoiding burnout and on how to combat it should it occur. The book offers innovative ways to change working practices, shares advice on building protective mechanisms into daily working life and explores the diverse array of career options that are available to doctors.

Dr. Adam Staten is a full time NHS GP with an interest in medical education, occupational burnout and the sustainability of the NHS. After studying at Cambridge University and King's College London School of Medicine, Adam completed a short service commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps before returning to the NHS to complete GP training. He now works as a GP partner in Milton Keynes and is medical director for the Milton Keynes GP Federation.

To purchase this book visit CRC Press Taylor & Francis Group online:
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Instructors may request a complimentary e-inspection copy when considering this book for course adoption.

Upcoming Conferences

Meeting	Location	Date	Website
European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Conference	Nicosia, Cyprus	April 6-8, 2020	http://www.eaohp.org/conference.html
Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology	JW Marriot, Austin, Texas	April 23-25, 2020	http://www.siop.org/Annual-Conference
American Occupational Health Conference (AOHC)	Washington Hilton, District of Columbia	May 3-6, 2020	https://acoem.org/Learning/American-Occupational-Health-Conference-(AOHC)/Future-Conferences
Work and Family Researchers Network Conference	New York Hilton, New York City	June 25-27, 2020	https://wfrn.org/conference-2020/

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