Identifying the right message

Over a period of 24 months, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) and the Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease (CREOD) in partnership with several industry partners, engaged in a research project to investigate whether workplace posters could help raise awareness of occupational skin disease (OSD) and potentially influence worker and employer behaviour in order to reduce the incidence of this preventable and common work-related disease.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of workplace posters, the research team interviewed over 30 front-line workers and asked them to provide feedback regarding the posters and whether they were effective in raising awareness and promoting prevention. The results showed that workers responded best to negative messaging, that is, posters that depicted the negative outcomes of occupational skin disease. In addition, the workers stressed that short and direct (face-to-face) communication is best, however posters specific to their workplace can also be an effective method for delivering the message. The workers also suggested that placing the posters in washrooms and lunchrooms was most effective for capturing attention.

Giving you an evidence based, online tool

Based on the worker feedback gathered during the research project, it was evident that workers respond best to messaging that is relevant to their workplace, industry and themselves. For this reason, the research team created a suite of seven OSD awareness posters that are specific to various industries. Each poster in the series promotes an occupational health and safety prevention practice.

WSPS in collaboration with CREOD, launched this new online tool that offers these tailored poster series to be downloaded through the WSPS website. There is no cost as this project has been funded by a research grant. This tool is available and accessible to all companies across the province and Canada.

Customizing your posters is easy

Simply go online to www.wsps.ca/OSDposters. There you will find several templates and an image library that can be used for building your poster. Place the images into the poster template and download a printable PDF. The posters are sized using standard page sizes so you can print right from your own computer. You could have effective posters in your workplace in a matter of minutes, making your employees aware of the risk of OSD and informing them of what they can do to prevent the disease. It’s win-win for everyone.

WSPS and CREOD are proud to offer this innovative and effective tool to Ontario workers and businesses. Through collaborative efforts we can continue to raise awareness for a common, debilitating and a preventable disease. For more information please visit: www.wsps.ca and www.creod.on.ca