



Pan American Health Organization

Regional Office of the
World Health Organization

**Promoting and Protecting the
Health of Healthcare Workers**

Initiatives and Next Steps

<http://www.paho.org>

World Congress on Safety and Health at Work

Seoul, Korea
July 1st, 2008



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**Regional Office
of the World
Health
Organization**

**Inter-American
System**



**System of
the UN**

**Specialized
Health Agency for
the Organization
of American
States**



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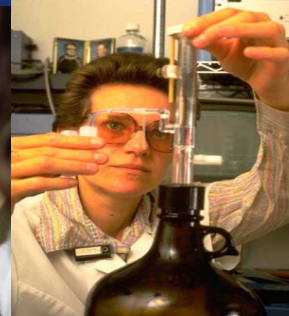
Health Care Workers

- 59.2 million full-time paid health workers worldwide¹
- 21.7 million healthcare workers in the Americas¹
- Women represent 70% of the health workforce²
- 57 countries have a critical shortage of health human resources¹

¹ WHO 2006; ² Cameron 2006



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Macro-level Trends

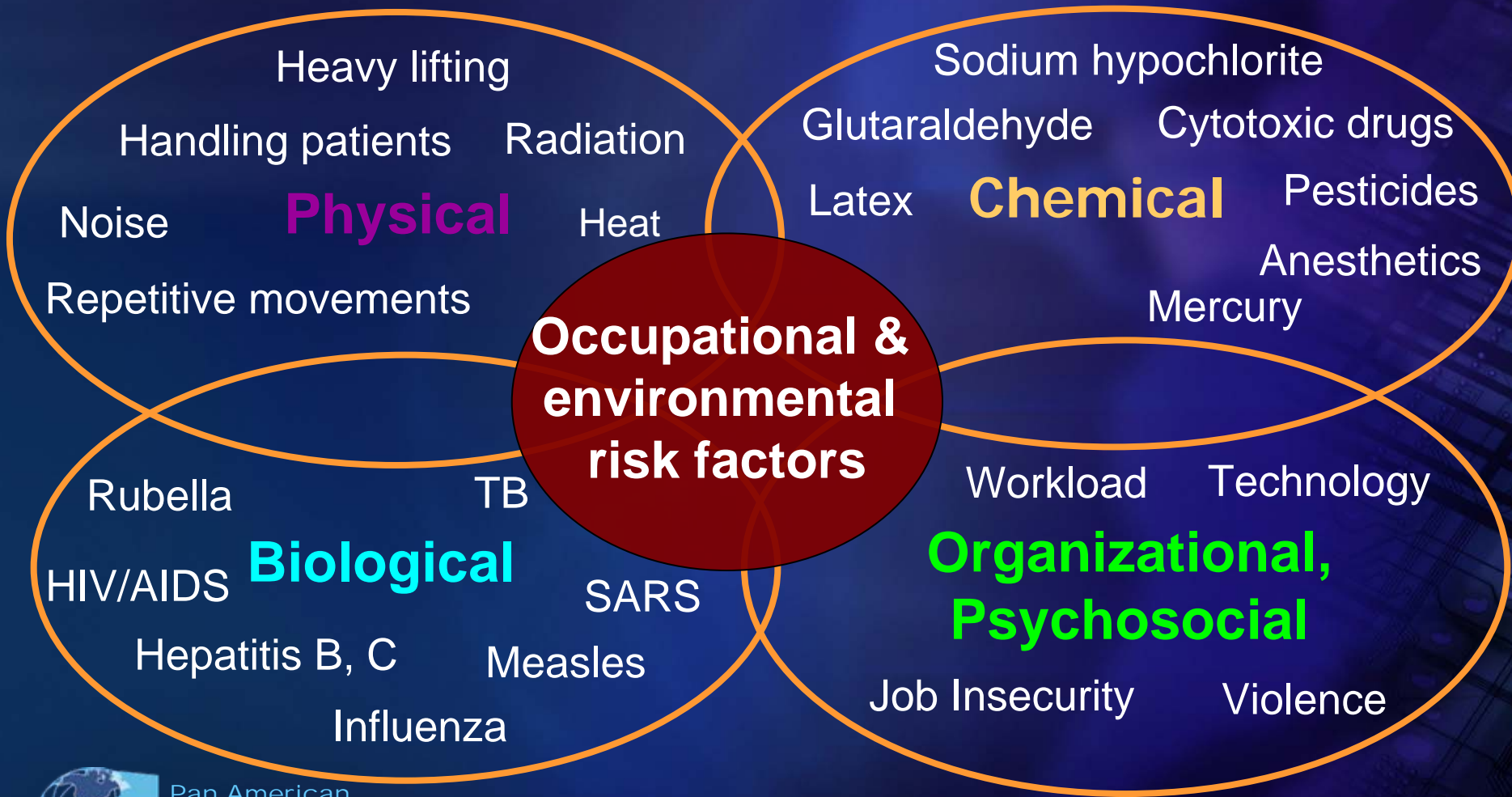


- Migration
- Population aging
- Precarious working conditions and occupational hazards
- Information systems
 - **“No data = no problem”**
- Technological advances
- Limited access to Occupational Health Services
- Increased global burden of disease



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25% of the Global Burden of Disease



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Occupational & Environmental Risk Factors



Psychosocial



Chemical



Biological



Physical

Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

- 3 million exposure incidents per year

In health-care workers:

- 40% of Hepatitis B
- 40% of Hepatitis C
- 4.4% of HIV

Are due to needlestick injuries



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WHO Environmental Burden of Disease 2003

Health and Safety in the Health Sector: Milestones in the Americas

WHO Global Plan of Action 2007-2013

Decade in Human Resources for Health
(World Health Day 2006)

IV Summit of the Americas

Strategic Alliance

Toronto Call for Action

Healthy Workplace Strategy

Regional Plan on Workers' Health



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WHO Workers' Health: Global Plan of Action (2007)

1. Devise national **policy** instruments on workers' health
 - Specific programs for the occupational health and safety of HCWs
 - Immunization of HCWs against HBV
2. **Protect and promote health** at the workplace
3. Improve the performance of and **access** to occupational health services
4. Provide and communicate evidence for **preventive action**
5. Incorporate workers' health into **other policies**



Intersectoral and Multi-level Collaboration



Strengthening Institutional Capacity

WHO Global Network of CC in Occupational Health



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Occupational Health Hierarchy of Hazards Controls

Most
effective



Least
effective

- Elimination or substitution (e.g.: eliminate unnecessary injections)
- Engineering Controls (e.g.: safer needle devices, sharps containers, mechanical lift)
- Administrative (policies and training programmes)
- Work Practices (Universal Precautions, no recapping)
- Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks, gowns, etc)



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*See www.who.int/hiv/pub/prev_care/healthservices/en/index.html

PAHO/WHO Technical Resources

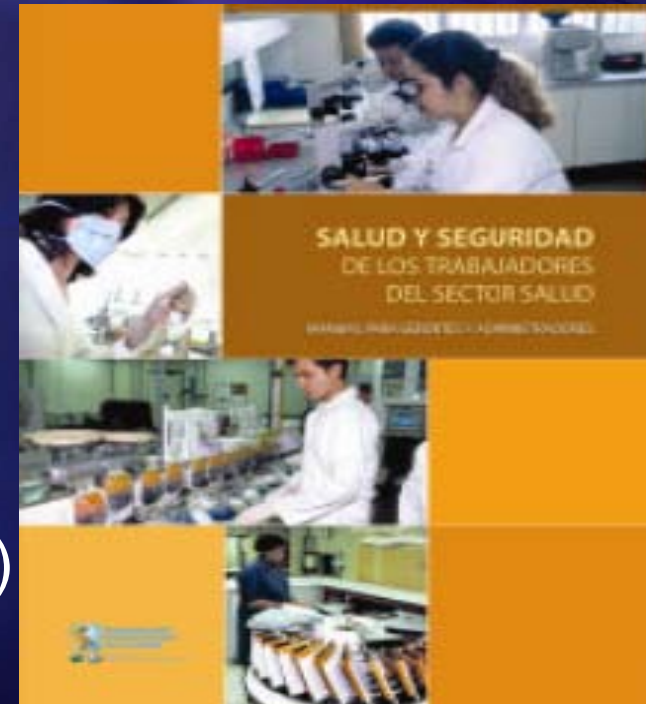
- Workers' Health and Safety in the Health Sector:
A Manual for Managers and Administrators

<http://www.bvsde.ops-oms.org/sde/ops-sde/bv-saludtrab.shtml>

- **Online course** for healthcare workers
 - Occupational health and safety
 - Working conditions, policies, norms
 - Workers' rights
- Global Environmental and Occupational Health E-Library (**Geolibary**)
<http://www.uic.edu/sph/glakes>



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PAHO/WHO Technical Resources

Preventing Needlestick Injuries Toolkit

- Collaborative effort lead by WHO/PAHO and ICN, in close coordination with ILO:
- Objectives:
 - Raise the awareness on the current situation
 - Inform decision-makers about the problematic situation
 - Built capacity for the implementation of policies and programs to prevent occupational transmission of blood-borne pathogens



http://www.who.int/occupational_health/activities/pnitoolkit/en/index.htm

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Hepatitis B Immunization Campaign for Health-Care Workers



Community Projects

Venezuela- Peru- Ecuador- Guyana

- A comprehensive approach for the health and safety of all health care workers
 - Strengthening of OHS Committees
 - Health protection and prevention
 - Health promotion
 - Training
 - Surveillance
 - Research
 - Policies
 - Communication



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Future steps: A Collective Approach

- Develop and/or strengthen information systems
- Build evidence for national policies on OHS for health-care workers
- Ensure accessibility to OHS services
- Ensure availability of safe technology and PPE
- Develop and implement a research agenda
- Disseminate and adapt best practices at the local level



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Thank you
Merci
Muchas Gracias
Obrigada
Kamsahamnida

**Collaboration, Coordination,
Commitment and Cooperation**

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