

# Mental health management in the specialist training in occupational health in Belgium

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# *Mental Health and work as a focal point in the aims and objectives of occupational medicine*

- The aim of occupational medicine is to protect and to promote the health and the work ability of the workers in and during their work:  
*(to promote the healthy worker in a healthy work environment )*
- Within this general aim the term health (according to WHO definition) includes also mental and social well-being.

# Mental Health as a focal point in the aims and objectives of occupational medicine

- The increasing attention for mental health (problems) and mental illnesses
- Mental health policy extended to the domain of work and enterprise
- Mental health as a subject for primary and secondary prevention in the work situation
- Mental Health threads as a subject for acute condition and disaster planning
- Changes in work related risk factors and in work related health effects

# Structure and organisation of occupational health in Belgium

## Regional government

Department Health and Well-being  
Administration preventive health care

*Advisory commission for medical department  
Of OH service*

## Federal government

Ministry of Labour  
Administration Inspection  
wellbeing at work

*Higher council for prevention and protection*

*accreditation commission*

**Employer and workers**

## ISPP (Internal Service for Prevention prevention and and protection)

- section risk evaluation and management
- section health surveillance

## ESPP (External Service for protection)

- department risk evaluation  
and management
- department health surveillance

*Plant based Joint Committee for  
prevention and protection*

# Position of occupational medicine and occupational health physician within Services for Prevention and Protection SPP

- General tasks
  - Health surveillance
  - Participation in risk evaluation and management
  - Prevention of work accidents and occupational diseases
  - Quality assessment
  - Management of medical data
  - Multidisciplinary collaboration

# Overview of specialist training in occupational medicine in Belgium

- Basic medical training (7 years) as an entrance condition
- 4 years specialist training:
  - 2 years master training
  - 2 years practice training
- Accreditation as a specialist in occupational medicine by the minister of health
- Access to the professional practice by the Minister of Labour

# Position of mental health in the master training in occupational health in Belgium

- Training is given in 5 universities:
  - French speaking part:  
ULB ( Bruxelles), UCL (Louvain), UL (Liège)
  - Dutch speaking part:  
K.U. Leuven;  
UG (Ghent) -VUB (Brussels)-UA (Antwerp)  
Interuniversity training

# Different concepts of training on mental health

- Psychological aspects of work (work load, mental work load)
- Psychological aspects of the enterprise and the work organisation (organisational psychology, personnel policy, motivation and work satisfaction, absenteeism, turn-over)
- Psychopathology induced by work and psychosocial work conditions (stress, burnout, PTSS, aggression)
- Occupational Psychiatric diseases (work related psychiatric diseases and rehabilitation in psychiatric patients)



# Overview courses in mental health management in training programs

KULeuven	UG-UA-VUB	UCL	ULg	ULB
Psychology of Work and health Occupational Psychiatric pathology	Work psychology (part of work organisation)	Psychopathologie industrielle et psychiatrie professionnelle	Aspects medico-psychologiques du travail	Psychopathologie au travail
4.5 cp	1 cp	3 cp	2 cp	3 cp

# Two years Master program in Occupational Medicine K.U. Leuven

- 2 years full-time training divided in 4 semesters of 13 weeks lectures, followed by examinations
- Curriculum construction: courses are divided in 5 groups:
  - work, health and disease:
    - work physiology, ergonomics, industrial toxicology, industrial hygiene, work pathology, radiation protection, organisation and management of occupational health service
  - supporting sciences on quantitative methods:
    - epidemiology, biostatistics, medical data handling in occupational medicine
  - organisation of labour and enterprises:
    - legal, social, psychological and economical aspects, social security, safety science
  - skills training and practical training:
    - problem solving clinics of occupational diseases, seminars, interdisciplinary case discussions, plant visits, practical training in occupational health services
  - scientific project and master thesis

# List of topics within K.U. Leuven course

- Psychology of work: concepts and external factors
- Stress at work: different models (Karasek, Warr)
- Outcomes of work and work stress :
  - Positive outcomes:
    - work satisfaction, performance
  - Negative outcomes:
    - Longterm outcomes: burnout,
    - Effects of negative psychosocial work conditions: harassment, aggression, bullying
    - Absenteism, turn over
    - Posttraumatic stress disease
    - Drugs and addiction
- Intervention in stress : individual and organisational
- Psychological aspects of low back pain

# Educational methods

- Lecturing (knowlegde)
- Selected literature assignment
- Assessment : paper or oral examination
- Presentation and discussion of cases during problem oriented clinics of occupational diseases (first year) or interdisciplinary seminars (second year)
- In practice training during additional two years training

# Conclusive remarks

- Inclusive or exclusive approach of mental health problems?
- Prevention (primary) or screening (secondary prevention) and treatment (and tertiary prevention)?
- What are the expected and required competencies (knowledge, skills and experience) for an occupational health physician dealing with mental health problems and mental illness?
- How to collaborate in a multidisciplinary service (first line versus second line approach, division of tasks and responsibilities)?