

# Population Health Clerkship in Employee Health

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## What is Occupational & Environmental Medicine (OEM)

- Medical speciality that focuses on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Promotion of optimal health and safety in the workplace
- Core Competencies:
  - Clinical Occupational and Environmental Medicine
  - OEM Related Laws and Regulations
  - Environmental Health
  - Work Fitness and Disability Management
  - Toxicology
  - Hazard Recognition & Evaluation
  - Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management
  - Health and Productivity
  - Public Health, Surveillance, and Disease Prevention

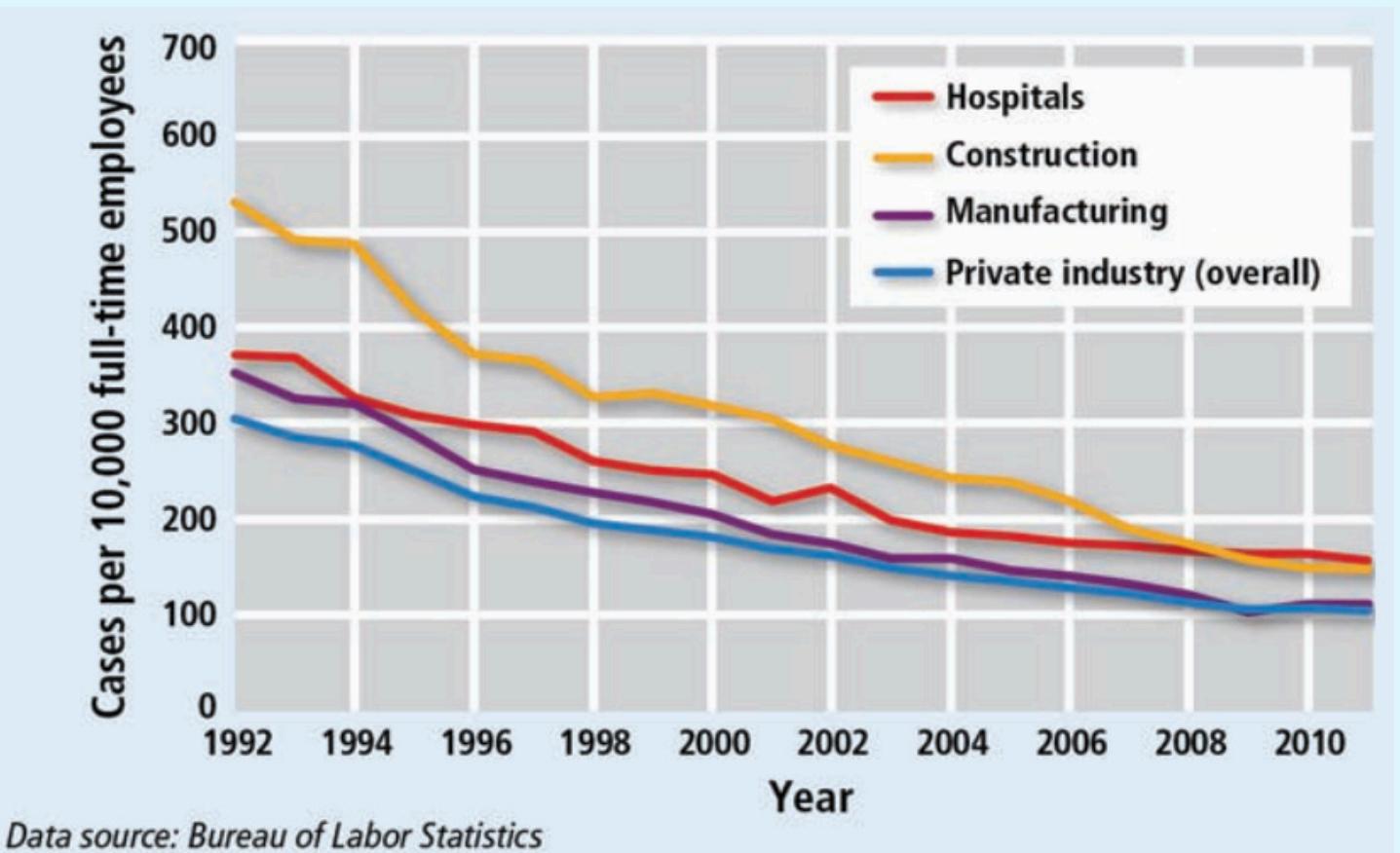
## Clinical Responsibilities

- Occupational injuries and illnesses
- Blood borne pathogen exposure
- Work evaluation and "Fit for Duty"
- Return to work clearance and worker's compensation
- Pre-employment and drug screening
- Respiratory mask clearance
- Drug Screenings
- Vaccinations and Annual TB

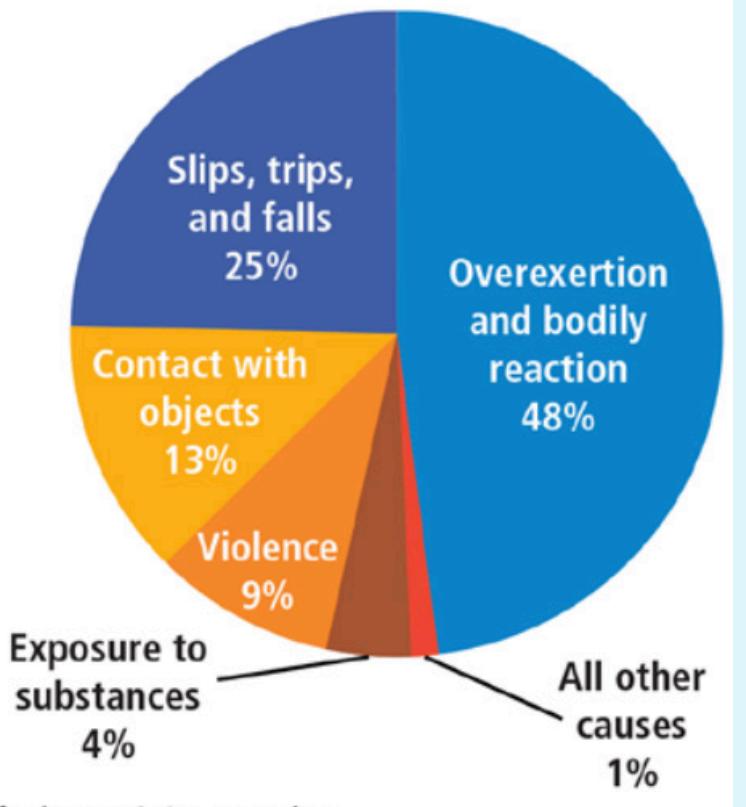
## Why OEM is Important

- Annual Statics on Workplace Safety<sup>1</sup>
  - 2.9 million non-fatal injuries/illnesses reported by US private industry
  - 752,600 among public employers (e.g. government, police & fire, schools)
  - Cost to employer is over \$1 billion per week
- Healthcare Specific Statistics<sup>2</sup>
  - 15.8 million healthcare workers in the US; 40-50% working in the hospital setting
  - 253,700 hospital work-related injuries/illnesses (annually)
  - 58,860 cases involved days away from work

## Injuries and Illnesses Resulting in Days Away from Work, by Industry, 1992–2011<sup>2</sup>



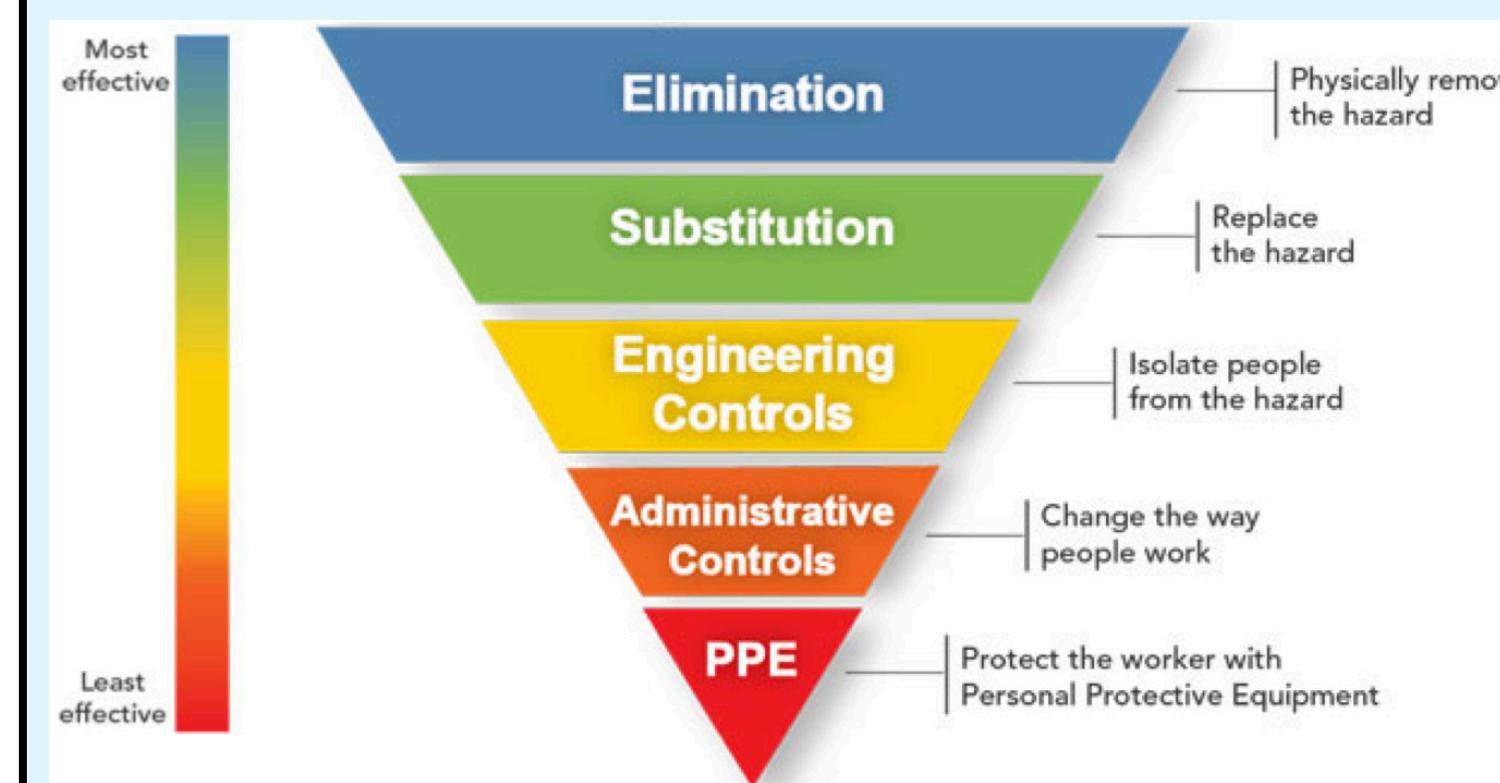
## Top Five Causes of Injury Among Hospital Workers<sup>2</sup>



## Major Health Care Worker Hazards

- Biologic:** blood borne pathogens, influenza, Ebola, MRSA, TB, SARS, MERS, zoonosis
- Chemical:** drugs (antineoplastics, aesthetic gases), sterilizing agents, mercury, latex
- Physical:** ergonomics, radiation exposure, musculoskeletal injury, workplace violence
- Psychologic:** stress, shift work, PTSD

## Hierarchy of Hazard Control<sup>3</sup>



## Guidelines for Patient Interviews<sup>4</sup>

- Occupational hazards not only factor into onsite injury/illness, but also play a major role in the overall health of the employee
- 5 Major Screening Questions:
  - What kind of work do you do?
  - Do you think your health problems might be related to your work?
  - Are your symptoms better or worse when you are at or away from work?
  - Are co-workers experiencing similar symptoms?
  - Have you now or previously ever been exposed to occupational hazards (see above)
- It is important to also consider non-occupational hazards when trying to determine the origin of an employee's issue. For this you can use **CH<sub>2</sub>OPD<sub>2</sub>**:
  - Community, Home, Hobbies, Occupation, Personal habits, Diet, Drugs

## Worksite Visit to Weetabix Cereals



Inspecting a local factory to assess for hazards and learn more about the safety measures in place to protect their employees

## Conclusion

- Workplace injuries/illnesses are common and expensive, especially within a high risk population like hospital employees
- Employee health services focus on treatment, compensation, and prevention of such injuries → with the main goal being **safety** and **employee functionality**
- The best preventative action is hazard management, not personal protection

## Acknowledgements and References

The authors would like to thank Dr. Maria Michas, Donna Dinoto, and all of the EHS staff at UMass for providing an outstanding learning experience.

<sup>1</sup> Employer-Reported Workplace Injury and Illness Summary (Rep.). (2016, October 27). Retrieved from Bureau of Labor Statistics website: <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/osh.nro.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Facts About Hospital Worker Safety (Rep.). (2013, September). Retrieved from Occupational Safety and Health Administration website: [https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hospitals/documents/1.2\\_Factbook\\_508.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hospitals/documents/1.2_Factbook_508.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (2016, July). Hierarchy of Controls. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html>

<sup>4</sup> Occupational safety and health administration. (2017). *Medical Screening and Surveillance Requirements in OSHA Standards: A Guide*. OSHA. [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)  
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