Abstracts

Working Condition and Happiness
Shinpei Sano (JSPS) and Fumio Ohtake (ISER, Osaka University)
This paper examines the impact of working condition on individual happiness, using three different data sets. Especially we analyzed the short term variation of individual happiness, the inference of the standard of living of a reference group on individual happiness, the identification of causality based on panel data, and the comparison between Japan and US. We found the following facts. Personal news plays an important part in determining individual happiness in the short term. Japanese are happy as long as they believe they are enjoying a higher standard of living than others, while Americans are unhappy. Unemployment has a large detrimental effect on individual happiness for youth.

Analysis of Work Needs among Elderly Workers
Sayaka Fukushima (CCC Co., Ltd)
The purpose of this research is to clarify the work needs of seniors through qualitative analysis and explore work styles through which workers post-retirement workers can work with satisfaction and high motivation while questioning the current Japanese work policies, which, in terms of working conditions and the treatment of workers, are applied to all employees instead of reflecting the various individual work needs. The questionnaire items included the following: Work motivation = Why do you work? Work style = How do you want to work? Work Values = What do you want to get from work? In keeping with the natural patterns of speech of participants, the "Constant Comparative Method," based on "Grounded Theory," was used to analyze the spoken data. The work needs of seniors have been summarized into the following 4 points. The first is "Reasonableness" due to short periods and no orders or instructions. The second is "Willingness to contribute to society," such as a willingness to express gratitude or to repay society's kindness. The third is "Satisfactory human relationships," such as relationships with the family and a willingness to interact among people. And the fourth is "Earning pocket money" to make their lives richer or the desire to buy their grandchildren what they love.
We set "Reasonable" and "Willingness to contribute to society" as the essential conditions of the work needs of seniors. And according to how much these two essential conditions are satisfied, we can divide the work styles for seniors into 4 categories, namely: Dual staffing with young people type, Job sharing by group type, Specialty trainer type, and Community business type among friends. From the results of this research, it is understood that, even for work after retirement, by providing work styles catering to individual work needs, there is a possibility of providing a variety of work styles to enable seniors work actively.

To Create a Comfortable Working Environment
Fumiko Obata (Kyoto University)
Industrial Safety and Health Law stipulates that employers shall endeavor to create a comfortable working environment in order to improve the level of safety and health in the workplace by taking continuous and systematic measures, and the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare is to publish the necessary guidelines for the appropriate and effective implementation of the measures to be taken by employers for the creation of a comfortable working environment. It is important for employees to make effective use of safety and health committees as well as collective bargaining in order to create a comfortable working environment. Citizens can contribute to the
creation of a comfortable working environment by using the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) system. Recently, the problems of passive smoke and employee mental health have led to an increasing awareness among the population about the importance of having a comfortable workplace. The increase of sexual harassment has also resulted in an emphasis on the creation of comfortable working environments in which work can be easily performed.

Recent Trends in Occupational Mental Health in Japan and a Stress Prevention Practice Focusing on Stress Coping

Yasumasa Otsuka (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health), Ayako Suzuki (Railway Technical Research Institute) and Misato Takada (Kitasato University)

In 2006, the Japanese government revised the Occupational Health and Safety Law and the Japan Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare promulgated Guidelines for Worker Mental Health Promotion. These guidelines recommend that companies plan an occupational health promotion program for employees and form four types of mental health care systems involving workers, supervisors, occupational mental health staff, and mental health resources external to the company. Self-administered job stress questionnaires and occupational counseling in the workplace were found to be useful as a worker self-care activity; however, the kind of knowledge about stress coping that would be beneficial to employees in coping with job stress was unclear. Therefore, we developed a questionnaire that assesses the level of knowledge about stress coping. Finally, there was a discussion on whether happiness could possibly prevent job stress.

Burnout as Occupational Stress among Human Service Workers

Makoto Kubo (Doshisha University)

This article is a review of existing literature on burnout as occupational stress among human service workers. It starts with a definition of burnout. The three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment defined by The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) are discussed. The second part covers the causes of burnout in the human service. I have chosen to highlight personal factors such as the "dedicated" personality, neuroticism and age, and organizational factors such as overload, autonomy, role stress and "emotional labor" (Hochshild, 1983). The third part covers coping with stress and recovery from burnout. I have focused on "detached concern" (Lief & Fox, 1963) and Bernier’s (1998) study. In the conclusion, I discuss what we have learned about burnout and the welfare of workers.