

NEW REPORT REVEALS THE GLOBAL VALUE OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES TO ORGANISATIONS, WORKERS, COMMUNITY & THE ECONOMY

**Evidence shows that well implemented Occupational Health services can generate a strong return on investment
Investigates beyond traditional Occupational Health to include wellness, sustainability and CSR**

Embargoed until 14:00, 30 April 2018, London. The global burden of Occupational Health (OH) issues is considerable. Fatal and non-fatal work-related injuries and illnesses worldwide equate to a cost of approximately €2680 billion, equivalent to 4% of the global GDP or the entire GDP of Great Britain.ⁱ Consequently, organisations, their workforce, and society have to bear a substantial cost.

Today, the Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM), the International SOS Foundation and KU Leuven University launch *“Occupational Health: the Global Value and Evidence”*. This new whitepaper discusses the value of Occupational Health (OH) from a global perspective and provides a synthesis of global evidence on the effectiveness of OH interventions and cost effectiveness.

SOM CEO, Nick Pahl, comments: *“Work related health issues are far reaching, through the impact on organisations, employees and their families and on the wider community and ultimately the economy. Effects are across industries and ailments, from the impacts of a bad flu seasonⁱⁱ to accidents and injuries. Many of these issues are preventable or at least can be reduced, hence the enormous potential of Occupational Health programmes. This report provides comprehensive evidence of significant positive health related impact and return on investment of successful Occupational Health interventions.”*

Lode Godderis, Professor at KU Leuven University and co-author of the report, *“The paper represents global evidence on the overall positive health impact and return-on-investment in a very wide range of Occupational Health interventions. From the implementation of a new manufacturing system in a medical centre to reduce the number of needle stick injuries, resulting in cost savings of \$62,000 a year, to a workers’ health promotion programme involving topics such as nutrition and lifestyle management. This study demonstrates that the potential of Occupational Health can be fulfilled in numerous areas of the field.”*

The paper demonstrates that Occupational Health services have a clear value: they improve the health of the working population; contribute to the prevention of work-related illnesses; prevent avoidable sickness absence through the provision of early interventions for those who develop a health condition; and increase the efficiency and productivity of organisations. They can also play a major part in protecting and revitalising the global economy.

Olivier LO, Group Medical Director, Occupational Health Services, commenting on behalf of the International SOS Foundation, said, *“This paper broadens the scope of OH beyond traditional occupational medicine, to include wellness, sustainability and social responsibility. It extends the meaning of value to encompass both tangible aspects, such as financial performance and legal compliance and intangible effects including reputation and corporate image. By adopting this approach, the report sets out the multi-dimensional aspect of OH value. Through OH interventions, organisations have the opportunity to also have an impact on the wider community and achieve the corporate social responsibility expected from them.”*

The report is available at: www.som.org.uk. It is also available on the *Why Occupational Health?* website: www.whyoccupationalhealth.co.uk

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About the Society of Occupational Medicine (SOM): The Society of Occupational Medicine is the UK organisation for all healthcare professionals working in or with an interest in Occupational Health. We are concerned with: the protection of the health of people in the workplace; the prevention of occupational injuries and disease; and related environmental issues. The Society stimulates interest and research in occupational medicine and works with the government, the healthcare community, health charities and other bodies to promote a healthier workforce. It also acts as the voice of occupational medicine, responding to consultative documents and media enquiries on issues affecting the speciality. A national leader in providing continued professional development and education for all doctors and healthcare professionals working in Occupational Health, it is also a forum for the exchange of ideas, best practice and networking opportunities. For more information please visit www.som.org.uk

About KU Leuven:

KU Leuven is Belgium's largest university, with more than 10,000 staff members. It is a research-intensive, internationally oriented university that carries out both fundamental and applied research. The Department of Public Health and Primary Care is a multidisciplinary department with a focus on community health, best practice and health policy. Its 8 research units conduct interdisciplinary research and provide high quality education in different domains. The department aims at supplying health care professionals and institutions with the insights, concepts and techniques that will enable them to respond optimally to the health needs and expectations of patient and society. For more information please visit: <https://gbiomed.kuleuven.be/english/research/50000687/index.html>

About the International SOS Foundation:

Established in 2011, the International SOS Foundation — Ambassadors for Duty of Care www.internationalsosfoundation.org — has the goal of improving the safety, security, health and welfare of people working abroad or on remote assignments through the study, understanding and mitigation of potential risks. The escalation of globalisation has enabled more individuals to work across borders and in unfamiliar environments; exposure to risks which can impact personal health, security and safety increases along with travel. The Foundation is a registered charity and was started with a grant from International SOS. It is a fully independent, non-profit organisation. For more information on Duty of Care and the International SOS Foundation, please visit <http://www.internationalsosfoundation.org/>

ⁱ [Global Estimates of Occupational Accidents and Work-related Illnesses 2017.](#)

ⁱⁱ This paper, for instance, addresses this issue in an occupational context and includes a study carried out in Clermont-Ferrand University Hospital in France comparing the cost of vaccinating hospital staff with the cost of sick leave among vaccinated and non-vaccinated employees in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The results show a benefit per vaccinated employee of €5, €26, and €20 per year, and a total benefit for the institution of €86,458.