

Employers Focus Group

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. My name is [Insert facilitator name], and I was contracted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to conduct this focus group. NIOSH is a research institute that aims to better understand workplace safety and health.

We are trying to understand how to better protect and promote the health and safety of retail workers, such as yourselves, and we'd like to talk about your views and experiences related to work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs)—injuries to muscles, tendons, and nerves, such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Everything said today is completely confidential, and we want to encourage you to speak openly about your ideas. Please respect each other's privacy and do not share anything that is discussed today with others outside this group.

A few more things to remember:

- Participation is completely voluntary.
- The focus group will last up to 90 minutes.
- With your permission, I will tape record and take notes during the interview. This is to make sure that I capture everything that you say accurately.
- You do not have to answer any question that you don't want to and you can stop participating at any time.
- There are no right or wrong answers. Everything you say is important. Your insights will help us better understand how to prevent WMSDs in retail sector.

Opener

Please introduce yourself and briefly describe your most recent job experience. Can you tell us a bit about your experiences as a manager on this retail site/with this employer?

I. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AND EXPERIENCE WITH WMSDs

We'd like you to first think about the activities you and your workers perform on the job and experiences with work-related musculoskeletal disorders, or WMSDs. These are injuries such as sprains, strains, back pain, tendinitis, rotator cuff tears, or anything else that deals with muscles and other tissues. During our discussion today, we'll refer to these injuries as muscle and joint pain.

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1. What do you think about when asked about muscle and joint pain workers experience on the job?
2. How does muscle and joint pain affect the workers on your retail crews?
3. What has been your experience with workers reporting muscle and joint pain on the retail sites you have worked on?
 - a. Do workers tend to report these injuries when they become aware of them?

II. SAFETY AND PREVENTION PERCEPTIONS

4. Based on your experience, what things do you do in your managerial role to prevent muscle and joint pain on the jobsite? (*Probe for steps to secure job sites, information sharing, trainings*).
 - a. What resources, approaches, or procedures do you most often use to support prevention of muscle and joint pain on the job site?
 - b. What motivated you to take these steps?
 - c. What has worked well in preventing these injuries?
 - d. What has not worked well in preventing these injuries?
5. Based on your experience, what do you do that is most effective for encouraging your workers to prevent muscle and joint pain on the jobsite?
 - a. What has worked well? Why?
 - b. What has not worked well in preventing these injuries?
6. What are some of the barriers or challenges you have faced when trying to avoid muscle and joint pain on the jobsite?
 - a. What is most important to you when making decisions about strategies or adopting solutions to prevent muscle and joint pain?
 - b. How important are cost and productivity in adopting solutions or strategies? What considerations are different for small businesses compared to larger ones?
 - c. What barriers might you encounter with workers whose primary language is not English?
 - d. What steps have you had to take to accommodate non-English speaking workers? What has worked well? What has not worked well?
7. What can be done to help employers be effective in adopting procedures or practices that are the most important for preventing muscle and joint pain?

- a. What guidelines or procedures for lifting or handling material safely are important to prevent muscle and joint pain? Why?
- b. What strategies around work organization (e.g., shift schedules, number of hours, how tasks are assigned, and job rotation) are important to prevent injuries? Why?
- c. Are there enough opportunities for workers to give feedback about these injuries and their causes on the job? Why or Why not? (*Probe: How difficult is it to get feedback from some workers compared to others (e.g., Latino and/or workers whose first language isn't English?)*)
- d. What should be done to make information about how to prevent muscle and joint pain injuries matter to employers so that it is widely promoted?
- e. What business considerations are important for helping small businesses share this information with their employees?

III. AGING IN THE WORKPLACE

As you might know, the U.S. workforce is getting older. Also, more people are working side-by-side with workers of various age groups (Baby Boomers, Gen Xers, Millennials). We'd now like to talk about your age as it relates to your work, as well as doing work alongside people who are older.

8. What perceptions or stereotypes do supervisors or other employers have of older workers? (*probe for: more/less accident prone, too slow on the job, excellent mentors to keep others from being injured, whether stereotypes differ for Latinos vs. non-Latinos*)
 - a. How could such perceptions affect someone's work? (*Probe for: older worker internalizing stereotypes, someone more/less likely to get hurt, discrimination, etc.*)
 - b. What stereotypes are there of younger workers (under 40), and how could such perceptions affect those workers?
9. What has been your experience working with older workers, say, someone who is older than 40?
 - a. How does the process of aging affect how workers do their job (*probe for: performing tasks, moving, handling equipment, etc.*)?
 - b. How do you think older workers' experiences with muscle and joint pain on the job compare to those of younger workers?
 - c. What do you think are some of the reasons why older workers might experience more frequent muscle and joint pain compared to younger workers?
10. How would you describe the interactions between older and younger retail workers?
 - a. What are some challenges of working with older workers/younger workers?

- b. What are some benefits of working with older workers/younger workers?

IV. INFORMATION NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11. Where do you go to get information about muscle and joint pain injuries and how to prevent them?
 - a. Which sources of information do you trust the most (*probe for: websites, government organizations*) Why?
 - b. In your experience, what are the best ways of delivering information about muscle and joint pain to retail employers?
- 12. What information or training would best help you and those you supervise avoid muscle and joint pain on the jobsite?
 - a. What topics would be most important to cover?
 - b. What would make the information or training the most useful for employers?
- 13. What suggestions do you have about preventing muscle and joint pain in retail jobs?

Wrap up

We're just about done with this session. As we wrap up, is there anything else you'd like to bring up that we haven't talked about today?