

Knowledge Transfer for Occupational Health

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Editorial

Within the last decades the incidence of workspace injuries and fatalities in the UK construction industry has declined markedly following the developments in occupational health and safety (OHS) management systems. However, safety statistics have reached a plateau and actions for further improvement of OHS management systems are called for. OHS is a form of organizational expertise that has both tacit and explicit dimensions and is situated in the ongoing practices. There is a need for institutionalization and for the transfer of knowledge across and along construction supply chains to reduce OHS risks and facilitate cultural change. The focus of this article is the factors that facilitate OHS knowledge transfer in and between organizations involved in construction projects. An interpretative methodology is used in this research to embrace tacit aspects of knowledge transfer and application. Thematic analysis

is supported by a cognitive mapping technique that allows understanding of interrelationships among the concepts expressed by the respondents. This paper demonstrates inconsistency in OHS practices in construction organizations and highlights the importance of cultivating a positive safety culture to encourage transfer of lessons learnt from good practices, incidents, near misses and failures between projects, from projects to programmes and across supply chains. Governmental health and safety regulations, norms and guidelines do not include all possible safety issues specific to different working environments and tied to work contexts. The OHS system should encourage employees to report near misses, incidents and failures in a 'no-blame' context and to take appropriate actions. This research provides foundation for construction project practitioners to adopt more socially oriented approaches towards promoting learning-rich organizational contexts to overcome variation in the OHS and move beyond the current plateau reached in safety statistics.

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