

The First NIIH – NIOSH Symposium on Long Working Hours: Summary^a

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The first Japanese National Institute of Industrial Health (NIIH) and US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (US NIOSH) symposium was held on March 22, 2006, at the Cincinnati Taft Laboratories of US NIOSH, and was hosted by the Organizational Science and Human Factors Branch (OSHFB), Division of Applied Research and Technology (DART) of US NIOSH (Branch chief, Steven L. Sauter). The symposium was entitled “Long working hours and related problems.” The aim of this symposium was to summarize recent trends of long working hours in Japan and the US and the effects on health, safety, and the economy. As the Agenda (the next page) will tell you, three researchers from the NIIH, including one guest researcher from the OSHFB, as well as six other researchers from OSHFB, presented their studies on this topic. Dr. Kenji Iwasaki presented “Karoshi” problems and recent changes in work hour regulations in Japan. Dr. Masaya Takahashi focused on alertness changes associated with long work hours, and Dr. Akinori Nakata discussed his research on immunological effects of long work hours and job stress. Drs. James Grosch, Claire Caruso, and Edward Hitchcock presented results of their studies of overtime workers in the U.S. using a nationally representative sample, and samples comprised of nurses, and truck drivers. Dr. Steven Sauter and Ms. Kellie Pierson presented their research on work at home, job quality and health problems. Dr. Ted Scharf discussed safety issues in fatigued workers, and Drs. Tapas Ray and Tim Bushnell

discussed demand and supply side labor market forces affecting long work hours. This symposium was well-attended by more than 50 employees of NIOSH Divisions in Cincinnati.

From this symposium, two articles have been published that highlight the effects of long work hours on health and safety, and possible impact on Japanese and US societies, which were the main topics of the symposium. Iwasaki *et al.*¹⁾ focused on trends in work hours and the compensation system for “Karoshi” in Japan. Caruso²⁾ summarized the results of 78 studies describing a possible broad impact of long work hours on workers, families, employers, and community. These two papers emphasized the importance of creating management systems for work hours to maintain health, safety, productivity, and work-family balance. Both NIIH and US NIOSH do share the same mission to develop scientific evidence and to build effective strategies to improve this situation.

Reference

- 1) Iwasaki K, Takahashi M, Nakata A (2006) Health problems due to long working hours in Japan: Working hours, workers' compensation (*Karoshi*), and preventive measures. *Ind Health* 44, 537–540.
- 2) Caruso CC (2006) Possible broad impacts of long work hours. *Ind Health* 44, 531–536.

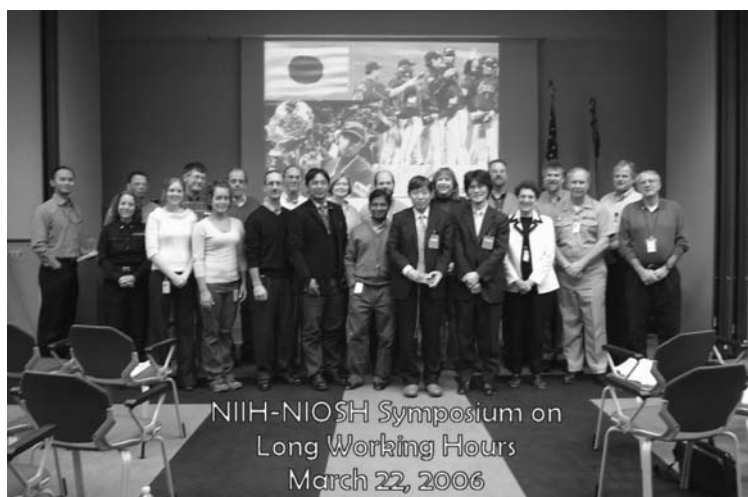


Photo by David W. Chrislip

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Agenda

- 1:00 p.m.–1:05 p.m. Opening**
Steven L. Sauter, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 1:05 p.m.–1:50 p.m. Death due to overwork (*Karoshi*) in Japan: Worker's compensation and standards for health management**
Kenji Iwasaki, PhD
 National Institute of Industrial Health, Japan
- 1:50 p.m.–2:05 p.m. The time of day at which we work as a key issue even in day-working population**
Masaya Takahashi, PhD
 National Institute of Industrial Health, Japan
- 2:05 p.m.–2:20 p.m. Job stress, working hours, and immune function in white-collar workers**
Akinori Nakata, PhD
 National Institute of Industrial Health, Japan
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 2:20 p.m.–2:30 p.m. General Discussion**
- 2:30 p.m.–2:40 p.m. Break**
- 2:40 p.m.–2:55 p.m. U.S. data on the characteristics and health associations of overtime workers**
James W. Grosch, PhD, Claire C. Caruso, PhD, Roger R. Rosa, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 2:55 p.m.–3:10 p.m. Health and safety outcomes related to work schedules in nurses**
Claire C. Caruso, PhD, Thomas R. Waters, PhD, James W. Grosch, PhD, Edward Krieg PhD, Peter Shaw, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 3:10 p.m.–3:25 p.m. Health and safety effects on U.S. truck drivers: An overview of NIOSH research**
Edward Hitchcock, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 3:25 p.m.–3:40 p.m. Relationships between frequency of work at home and indicators of job quality and health**
Steven L. Sauter, PhD, Jennifer Schmit, MA, Kellie Pierson, BS, Naomi G. Swanson, PhD, Dennis Hanseman, PhD, Lawrence R. Murphy, PhD*
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
 *University of Cincinnati
- 3:40 p.m.–3:55 p.m. Hazardous work environments: the consequences for job control, cumulative fatigue, and risks for injury**
Ted Scharf, PhD, Lawrence R. Murphy, PhD, Akinori Nakata, PhD, Robert Park MS
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 3:55 p.m.–4:15 p.m. Economist's perspective on long working hours**
Tapas Ray, PhD, Time Bushnell, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA
- 4:15 p.m.–4:25 p.m. General Discussion**
- 4:25 p.m.–4:30 p.m. Closing**
Naomi G. Swanson, PhD
 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA