



## Participatory Ergonomics: Barriers to Adoption in Small Firms

### Evaluation of a participatory ergonomics intervention in small commercial construction firms

*Ann Marie Dale, Lisa Jaegers, Laura Welch, Bethany Gardner, Bryan Buchholz, Nancy Weaver and Bradley Evanoff. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, June 2016.*

#### Overview

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD) among construction workers remain high. Participatory ergonomics (PE) interventions that engage workers and employers in reducing work injury risks have shown mixed results. Researchers recruited seven contractors and 86 workers in three different specialty trades for a PE program to last at least three months, then evaluated the process and results.

#### Key Findings

- Process measures showed good delivery of training and high worker engagement. Workers' knowledge improved; they identified many ergonomic solutions, and reported changes in their work practices and tools.
- Contractor participation was low, and contractors provided appropriate equipment at the worksite only one-third of the time.
- No changes were seen in WMSD symptoms or reported physical effort.
- Lack of support from contractors proved to be the primary barrier to sustainable adoption. Future interventions should engage higher levels of the construction organizational system, such as general contractors, to improve specialty contractor involvement on WMSDs.

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#### See abstract:

<http://bit.ly/28JzQLI>

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