

Editorial

Global Cooperation for Prevention of STFs (Slips, Trips and Falls)

The “International Conference on Fall Prevention and Protection 2013” was held at JNIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) (Tokyo, Kiyose) on 23–25th October, 2013. Researchers and administrative officials related to Slips, Trips and Falls (STF) from ten countries (the United States, Europe, and Asia) attended this international conference. Thirty-two presenters presented research results, case studies, related technology development, and governmental approaches, followed by lively discussions.

A workshop on fall prevention and protection was held during the afternoon of the second day. This workshop was organized as a part of the “Occupational Safety and Health Research Strategies” of JNIOSH. Approximately 100 participants attended this workshop, with English-Japanese simultaneous translation. Eight senior researchers and administrative officials from the United States, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, France and Japan contributed plenary presentations in this workshop. The current STF exposures and countermeasures in each country were presented. After the presentations, a panel discussion with all presenters was held. The need for collaboration between countries was discussed and proposed. The direction for future STFs prevention research and practice was also discussed.

Titles of the presentations and presenters for the workshop were as follows:

- (1) “A total worker safety approach for preventing slips, trips, and falls”
Dr. Hongwei Hsiao (the United States of America, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH))
- (2) “Study trend of slip, trip, fall (STF) in Korea”
Dr. Woonchul Shin (Korea, Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute for Safety)
- (3) “A holistic approach on fall prevention and protection in Hong Kong”
Dr. Alan Chan (Hong Kong, Occupational Safety and Health Council)
- (4) “Addressing fatalities and injuries at work due to falls —the Singapore journey”
Mr. Suresh Navaratnam (Singapore, Ministry of

Manpower Singapore, Occupational Safety and Health Division, Policy, Information and Corporate Services Department)

- (5) “Prevention of OSTFA (occupational slips trips and falls accidents): the activities and perspectives of the INRS”
Dr. Sylvie Leclercq (France, French National Research and Safety Institute (INRS))
- (6) “The state of science on occupational slips, trips and falls on the same level”
Dr. Wen-Ruey Chang (the United States of America, Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety, Editor of *Ergonomics*)
- (7) “Current priorities in fall prevention research at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety”
Dr. Ian Noy (the United States of America, Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety)
- (8) “Present situation and future direction of fall accident prevention measures based on the Industrial Safety and Health Law”
Mr. Hideo Kamaishi (Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Occupational Safety and Health Division)

A tour was carried out at the major JNIOSH research facilities (Kiyose district) in the afternoon of the third day of the conference focusing on fall prevention. The international participants showed great interest, and considerable discussions took place between participants and researchers of JNIOSH. The JNIOSH tour successfully concluded this international conference.

This international conference was one of the activities of Technical Committee on Slips, Trips and Falls (STF) of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) and was a major IEA international conference targeting the prevention of slips, trips and falls in 2013. We are most pleased to present seven “selected papers” from the conference for this special issue of “Industrial Health”. For more details on the conference, please refer to the link below.

<http://www.jniosh.go.jp/en/icfpp2013/index.html>.

There are many occupational incidents caused by falls in Japan. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare

(MHLW) of Japan reported that of the 1,093 fatalities (367 of them in construction) in 2012, 271 (157 in construction) were associated with falls. In addition, of the 119,576 (17,073 in construction) fatal incidents and casualties (absent from work for more than four days) in 2012, 20,017 (5,790 in construction) cases associated with falls. Among the occupational incidents in the construction industry, the ratio of fall-related incidents to all incidents resulting in casualties (absent from work for more than four days) was approximately 35%, and the ratio of incidents causing fatalities was as high as 43%¹⁾. Therefore, occupational fall prevention is a top priority in Japan.

We understand many countries are facing the same problems as Japan with STF incidents in the workplace. The number of victims and the governmental systems,

including regulations, for the prevention of these incidents may be different in each country. However, the phenomenon of slips trips, and falls is common to all humankind, and, thus, many countermeasures may also be common for all countries.

We believe that this conference was an opportunity, not only to exchange the latest information, but also to form new networks. Our earnest aspiration is that these new networks will be a step towards reduction in slips, trips and falls for all countries.

Reference

- 1) MHLW (2013) *Syokuba no Anzen* (Safety for work place site (in Japanese). <http://anzeninfo.mhlw.go.jp/user/anzen/tok/anst00.htm>.

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