

Research helps workplaces make decisions about the prevention of MSDs.

Richard Wells (CRE-MSD, University of Waterloo) and Desre Kramer (CRE-MSD*, University of Waterloo)*

Research can help workplaces make decisions about the prevention of MSDs. Research is useful since so many decisions are based on uncertainty, and research can at least weigh up the options. But, for research to be useful to decision-making in workplace, it needs to be both “strong” enough, and “relevant” enough. The strength of evidence can vary from poor to excellent depending on whether the advice is based on anecdotes, commercially-sponsored websites, many good research studies, or a synthesis or review of research. The relevance or practice readiness of research will depend on whether it is only based on laboratory studies, or whether there have also been workplace-based research with workers involved in the research process. In this poster, we consider the difficulty of doing workplace-based research; the different kinds of knowledge that workplace parties use to make decisions; and explore examples of research on back-belts, on office workstation adjustment, and on participative ergonomics.

*CRE-MSD - Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders