

Editorial

Harmonizing work with diseases treatment and prevention

Recently, there has been increased global recognition of the need to develop a more harmonic approach to work during diseases treatment¹⁾. In this context, ‘harmonic’ refers to the maintenance of a balance between work and efforts to treat or prevent illness. This trend is rooted, firstly, in the labor shortage that has been created by the aging of populations and low birth rates, especially in developed countries. It also derives from the promotion of diversity and inclusivity by corporations, and by the current collaboration between clinical and occupational medicine²⁾. In terms of practical implications, occupational health professionals promote harmonization to meet two important challenges: disease prevention and the supportive fitness for returning-to-work. Strategies to achieve these goals must consider not only the advice provided by occupational health professionals, but also the characteristics of the extant frameworks for creating a bridge between medical institutions and workplaces.

Volume 57: Issue 1 (2019) of *Industrial Health* contains 10 articles, including a review, original articles, a case report and a field report: (1) Wada *et al.*: Harmonizing work with the treatment and prevention of sleep disordered breathing in commercial motor vehicle drivers: implications for health and productivity management, a review article; (2) Muto *et al.*: Information exchange using a prescribed form and involvement of occupational health nurses promotes occupational physicians to collaborate with attending physicians for supporting workers with illness in Japan, an original article; (3) Endo *et al.*: Durations of first and second periods of depression-induced sick leave among Japanese employees: The Japan sickness absence and return to work (J-SAR) study, an original article; (4) Taguchi *et al.*: What causes patients with breast cancer to change employment?: Evidence from the health insurance data in a medical facility, an original article; (5) Takahashi *et al.*, A cooperative support model for cancer treatment and employment balance: from focus-group interviews of health and business professionals, an original article; (6) Persechino *et al.*, Improving the job-retention strategies in multiple sclerosis workers: the role of occupational physicians, an original article; (7) Kusumoto *et al.*, Characteristics of self-reported daily life

note (LN) users in return-to-work judgement for workers on sick leave due to mental health conditions, and usefulness of the tool, an original article; (8) Muramatsu *et al.*, Relationship between treatment and period of absence among employees on sick leave due to mental disease, an original article; (9) Wada *et al.*, Toward the harmonization of work with treatment and prevention for patients with chronic respiratory failure, a case report; and (10) Katagiri *et al.*, Promoting and inhibiting factors for the use of validated dietary assessment questionnaires in health check-up counseling: from occupational health nurses and dietitians’ perspective, a field report. Other articles submitted to this special issue are now under review in future regular issues of *Industrial Health*.

Endo *et al.* analyzed the first and the second periods of sick leave due to depression, and Muramatsu *et al.* discussed the relationship between psychological treatment and the length of sick leave to elucidate the factors that contribute to the duration of sick leave. Taguchi *et al.* focused on the actual behaviour of workers diagnosed with breast cancer and analyzed employment changes due to cancer treatments. In terms of supporting the return to work of patients, Persechino *et al.* clarified the important roles of occupational physicians for workers with multiple sclerosis, and Kusumoto *et al.* showed the usefulness of daily self-report life note in the judgments about the return to work of patients on sick leave due to mental illness. Wada *et al.* discussed the roles of several types of health professionals and the characteristics of supportive workplaces for workers with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Addressing the need for cooperation in the service of balancing work with treatment, Takahashi *et al.* emphasized the importance of establishing collaborations between medical institutions and companies to support cancer patients wishing to remain at work. Muto *et al.* asserted the importance of developing a practical system for such collaboration utilizing occupational health nurses and forms for the exchange of information. In terms of preventing exacerbation, Wada *et al.* reviewed several problems and solutions related to sleep-disordered breathing, especially in commercial motor vehicle drivers, and Katagiri *et al.* evaluated the use of validated dietary

assessment questionnaires at health check-up counseling sessions to deal with non-communicable diseases.

References

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- 2) Muto G, Yokoyama K, Endo M (2018) [Solutions against declining birthrates confronting Japan's aging society by supporting female workers in harmonizing work with their health and social issues: fertility, chronic illness, and raising children]. *Nippon Eiseigaku Zasshi* **73**, 200–9.

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