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Konuk Editörlerden Notlar/ Notes From Guest Editors

Work is by definition an economic activity. However, the economic aspect of accidents and diseases at work has not yet been explored to an extent that would allow a sufficient understanding and confrontation of occupational risk. ROWER project, a coordination research action funded by the European Commission, aims to enhance research in this topic by inviting contributors from different scientific disciplines to focus their research on this aspect.

The 1st ROWER Conference on Economics of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), held in Izmir, Turkey 23-25th April 2009, was the first of a series of activities in this direction. 43 quality contributions addressing various aspects of this multidimensional topic were accepted and presented throughout the three days of the Conference. 14 of them, representative of these various aspects, were selected for publication in this special issue.

There are two main levels of analysis in the Economics of Occupational Health and Safety: the level of the enterprise, where issues (e.g. costs) are examined from the aspect of each unit economic entity (i.e. enterprise) and the level of the society, where relevant issues are examined at a macro level including enterprises, individuals and other social entities.

The topics of the Conference were structured accordingly. In more detail:

Enterprise level:

- Measuring economic impact of occupational accidents and diseases in enterprise level (agreement of common principles for measuring costs, tools and methodologies).
- The case of small and medium enterprises and contracting.
- Economic motives and leverage.
- Cost internalization (the case of the enterprise)

- Quality of work and productivity - international competition,
- Society level:
- Impact of changes in labour force structure (ageing, increase of female employment, etc.) and relation to quality of employment.
 - Impact of new trends in economy (shifting to less labour-intense sectors, international competition, new forms of employment, etc.)
 - Measuring economic impact of occupational accidents and diseases in national level (agreement of common principles for measuring costs).
 - Economic impact of regulation (legislation, insurance systems, equal opportunities, etc.)
 - Cost internalization (the case of the State).

Apart from cost internalization, where not many relevant papers appeared in the Conference, all other issues saw some good contributions. The papers selected for this issue reflect these topics according to the following table:

Conference topic	Paper (authors)
Enterprise level:	
Measuring economic impact of occupational accidents and diseases in enterprise level	Yükçü and Gönen, Dimitrov
The case of small and medium enterprises and contracting	Targoutzidis and Karakoltsidis
Economic motives and leverage	Saddulah and Kanten
Quality of work and productivity - international competition	Kilic and Selvi
Society level:	
Impact of changes in labour force structure	Antonopoulou and Dervisi, Geitona and Androutsou
Impact of new trends in economy	Böckerman and Laukkanen, Baran et al.
Measuring economic impact of occupational accidents and diseases in national level	Georgiou et al., Liwing et al.
Economic impact of regulation	Gallina

A concise presentation of the papers follows.

In their paper, Yükcü and Gönen examine the issue of measuring costs at the enterprise level, by reviewing existing literature and proposing a framework for the assessment of such costs as quality costs. Dimitrov's paper also presents a quantitative approach to OHS assessment and measurement at the company level.

The paper of Targoutzidis and Karakoltsidis attempts to present the whole spectrum of factors of the new work environment and their linkage to OHS. They mainly focus on small enterprises and contracting, i.e. downsizing in the level of OHS decision making, in the context of the global competition and technological evolution.

In their paper, Saddulah and Kantan examine motives and safe behaviours in the context of safety climate, which is a mainstream approach in modern safety literature. Their empirical analysis in a shipyard shows significant correlation between safe behavior and motivational factors, such as "absence of work pressure", along with other technical and organizational factors.

Kiliç and Selvi focused on the relation of OHS and productivity drivers, such as job satisfaction. Their empirical analysis in the hotel sector indicates a significant relation between job satisfaction and OHS.

In their paper, Antonopoulou and Dervisi deal with the implications of mental health and employability, highlighting the dual relation between work and mental health: work as a cause and as a part of cure of mental health problems. Their analysis takes place in the Greek mental health system reforms. Geitona and Androutsou examine a modern sector of the economy, i.e. social economy, in Greece, commenting on two relevant empirical analyses. Their findings contradict the general notion that a sector

away from the direct fierce competition enjoys high levels of OHS and security.

In their paper, Baran et al. attempted to investigate the impact of job insecurity in OHS. Their empirical analysis in a downsizing company found significant statistical relationship between the job insecurity perceptions of employees and their physical as well as mental health indicators. The paper by Böckerman and Laukkanen deals with a different modern OHS issue, namely presenteeism (i.e. going to work while sick). Through an empirical analysis they found that presenteeism is sensitive to working time arrangements, such as full-time work, mismatch between desired and actual working hours, shift or period work and overlong working weeks.

The paper by Georgiou et al. describes the methodology and results for cost estimates in society level in the United Kingdom, which is one of the few countries undertaking such an effort officially. This methodology is presented and commented thoroughly, and limitations in methodological issues and data are highlighted. Liwing et al. also attempt an estimate of costs at the level of society, but their analysis focuses on a specific OHS issue (Co-occurrence of Neck/Shoulder and Low Back Disorders) in a different country (Sweden) and with a less formal approach.

Gallina also focuses on the society level but his approach incorporates State intervention, by means of regulation and the subsequent employer response. His analysis takes place in the context of the Canadian OHS system and it presents the holistic effect of regulation on OHS through the economic mechanisms. This is the only paper that also touches the issue of cost internalization.

Two papers of medical origin are also included in this special issue representing two relevant sessions that took place in the Conference.

The paper by Chifiriuc *et al.* describes the emergence of the antibiotic resistance and multi-resistance to antibiotics drives the

acute necessity for the developing of new anti-infective strategies and the permanent changes of the disinfectants used in the hospital environment. The purpose of their study was to investigate by adapted disk diffusion techniques the antimicrobial potential of six newly synthesized chemical compounds, 5 usual disinfectants and 13 newly synthesized chemical compounds with potential disinfectant activity against 100 enterobacterial strains isolated from different surfaces in the hospital environment.

In their paper, Voidarou *et al.* attempted to investigate of antibiotic profile of microbes isolated from foods in order to evaluate the dispersion of resistance, to ensure the food safety. This study is important for the clarification of food safety and human health because of antibiotics play a crucial role in the health care, their widespread use is increasingly causing some serious health consequences.

ROWER project activities will continue for the next years, hoping to boost research in the Economics of OHS through quality contributions, continuing the successful start of the 1st Conference.

Antonis Targoutzidis
Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety
(ELINYAE)
Thessalonica/Greece
Email address: targoutzidis @elinyae.gr

Nazmiye Altintas
Ege University, Faculty of Medicine İzmir/Turkey
Email address: nazmiye.altintas@ege.edu.tr