



The Use of the Revised 14-Item Version of the Organizational, Policies, and Practices (OPP) Scale in Firefighters

We wanted to know if the OPP-14 questionnaire was valid for firefighters.



What is the problem?

We know that the policies and practices that workplaces use to make the workplace safer and manage injuries are important to health of workers. It is difficult to know what workplaces do. So questionnaires that workers can use to tell about their workplace practices can tell us this. There is a questionnaire (The Organizational Policies and Practices Questionnaire or OPP-11) that can be used by workers, but it only had one question about ergonomic practices. We know ergonomics is important. We wanted to know if we added more questions about ergonomics, would this new OPP-14 work for firefighters.

How did the team study the problem?

A group of 261 firefighters from Hamilton, Ontario completed the OPP-14. They also reported their age, years of service and tenure. We used statistical analyses that test whether the questions fit the structure intended. We used a different statistical technique to test whether the questionnaire measured firefighters in a way that we could trust the scores, and that different subgroups of firefighters would answer in the same way. We looked for items that did not fit or measure well, and we tried to propose a scoring that was best.

What did the team find?

We found that the questionnaire did have the 4 subscales that it was supposed to have: Safety Practices, Ergonomics Practices, Disability Management and People-Oriented Culture. We found that some rescoring of questions improved their measurement properties. We found that age, years of service and rank did not affect how firefighters responded to 11 of the questions. Questions on modifying jobs and cooperative relationships were answered a bit differently by firefighters who were older or had more years of service which may reflect changing roles and perspectives. Overall, the questions performed well.

How can this research be used?

This question will be used by the FIREWELL team to explore differences in how different firefighters experience their workplace policies and practices either within a service or between different services. Other researchers may use it the same way. Fire services can use this validated questionnaire to assess how firefighters feel about their workplace policies and practices around health, safety and injury management. This might identify areas needing improvement and areas where things are working well.

Cautions

We know that people vary in what they know or think about their workplaces policies and procedures based on their experiences and knowledge. This questionnaire reflects what people think, which may or may not be the actual policies and procedures of that workplace.

Reference: Shi Q, MacDermid JC, Tang K, Sinden KE, Walton D, Grewal Confirmatory Factor and Rasch Analyses Support a Revised 14-Item Version of the Organizational, Policies, and Practices (OPP) Scale. *J Occup Rehabil.* 2017 Jun;27(2):258-267.

Funding Sources: CIHR FRN: 114112