

Common OH Issues: physical and mental health, including specific occupational diseases

OH Strategies and Interventions including workplace prevention and health promotion.

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Common Occupational Health issues

- Impact of work on health
- Impact of health on work

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The role of the OH clinician

**Management referral- sickness
absence, management/
performance issues**



**Fit for work medicals e.g. safety
critical/ driver/ high climber,
OGUK, seafarer – MCA, aviation,
divers**



‘Pre- placement’



**Health Surveillance-
including Appointed
Doctor for HSE
Statutory
e.g. Lead, Asbestos
Noise, HAVS,
Respiratory**

Self referral / primary care



Pensions/ill health retirement



**Health promotion/Travel advice/
vaccinations**



The Management Referral- Independent Medical Assessment

- Long term sickness absence
- Short term sickness absence / Pattern of absence
- Advice on adjustments
- Performance concerns
- Changes to role (return to office post covid!)



- At request of employee
- Injury at work
- Concerns re Mental Health
- Fitness to attend formal meeting

The Management Referral

**Common mental health issues
–‘stress’ including work
related /anxiety/
depression / burnout**



**Musculoskeletal – back, neck,
upper limb, injuries**

**Other- ANYTHING!
Migraine, Long
Covid/CFS/Fibromyalgia,
Cancer, Cardiovascular
disease, menopause,
Neurodivergence**



(Work related) Stress

HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.'

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Work related stress and the Management standards

Employers have a legal duty to protect workers from stress at work by doing a risk assessment and acting on it. This is the same duty they have to protect people from other health and safety risks.



Six key areas of work design which have been associated with impact on stress levels:

Demands
Control
Support
Relationships
Role
Change

Specific occupational diseases

Respiratory:
Occupational
asthma,
pneumoconiosis:
(silicosis,
asbestosis, coal
workers)
EAA (Pigeon
fanciers lung,
farmers lung),
IPF

Skin-contact and
allergic
dermatitis



HAVS/Carpal
tunnel syndrome

Noise Induced
Hearing loss



BBV (and
other infections)



Cancer - lung,
bladder,
melanoma,
mesothelioma



'Reportable occupational diseases- Regulation 8 of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)

**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
Cramp of the hand or forearm
Tendonitis or tenosynovitis**

Carcinogens, mutagens and biological agents

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Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (White Finger)

- Affects blood vessels, nerves, and tissues of the hands and arms
- Caused by prolonged exposure to vibrating tools.
- Sensory and vascular (Secondary Raynaud's Phenomena)



- White, pale, or blue fingers when exposed to cold or vibration.
- Numbness and tingling in affected fingers
- Pain or discomfort - particularly during or after exposure to cold or vibration.
- Reduced grip strength, hand strength and dexterity

- Health Surveillance- required under Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 (UK)
- Early detection and prevention
- Risk assessment
- Tiered approach- baseline, annual questionnaire, medical referral if symptoms (or minimum 3 yearly)
- Tier 4 (HAV4) – formal diagnosis and grading of HAVS (OHP)



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Occupational Asthma

<https://www.som.org.uk/work-related-asthma-and-occupational-asthma-introduction>

OH Strategies and Interventions including workplace prevention and health promotion

Individual Focused- employee behaviour and lifestyle choices



Environment-Focused Interventions:
Aim to create a healthier and safer work environment

Organisational-Level:
Address broader organisational factors that can impact employee health and well-being.



OH Strategies and Interventions including workplace prevention and health promotion- examples:

Individual:

Wellness programs: promoting healthy eating, physical activity, stress management, and smoking cessation.

Health education and counselling:.

Individual risk assessments and tailored interventions: Identifying specific health risks for individuals and providing targeted support- signposting



Environment:

Ergonomic workstations, providing access to healthy food options, promoting physical activity through initiatives like sit-stand desks.

Promoting a supportive work culture: Encouraging open communication,

Developing comprehensive workplace health policies:

Establishing clear guidelines for health and safety practices, including procedures for managing stress and mental health.

Organisational:

Workload management: Ensuring reasonable workloads and providing support for employees to manage stress

Promoting work-life balance: flexible working policies
Improving communication and collaboration:

‘Benefits of OH Strategies and Interventions?’

- **Improved employee health and well-being: reducing absenteeism and presenteeism,**
- **Increased productivity and performance:.**
- **Enhanced employee morale and job satisfaction:**
- **Improved organisational culture: recruitment/retention**

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'Effectiveness of workplace interventions for health promotion LANCET June 2025

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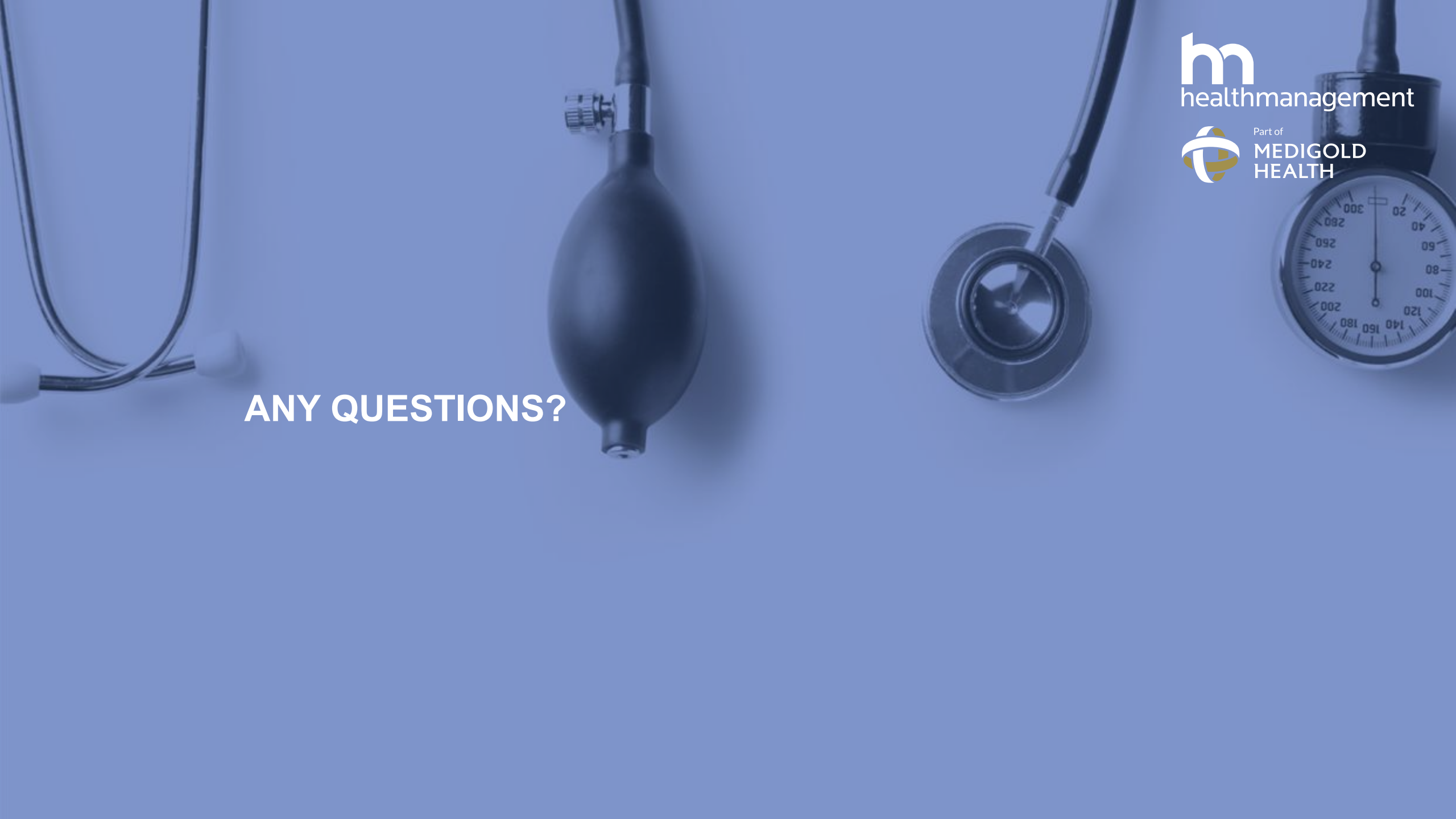
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The background of the slide is a solid blue color with a faint, semi-transparent image of medical equipment. On the left, a stethoscope is visible. In the center, there is a black rubber bulb with a metal valve. On the right, another stethoscope is shown, and below it is a circular pressure gauge with a white face and black markings, likely for a blood pressure cuff.

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ANY QUESTIONS?