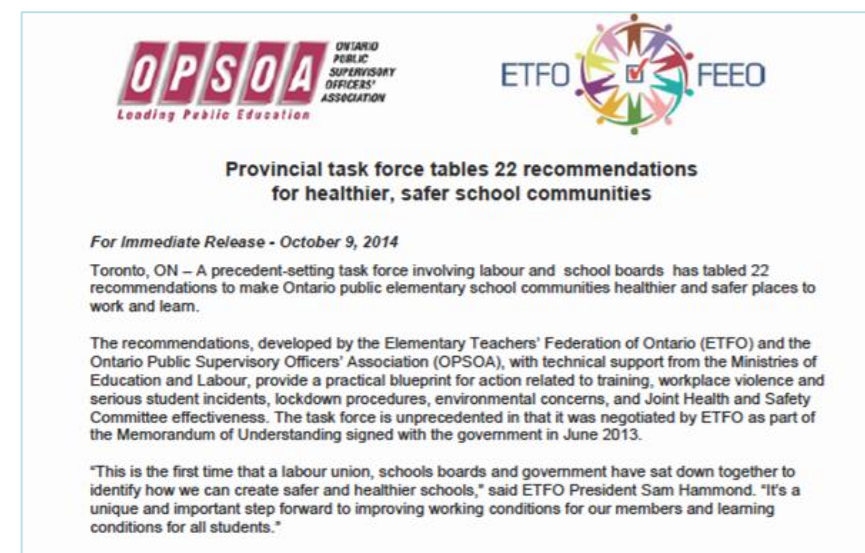


BACKGROUND

- Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) are critical in ensuring awareness of workplace health and safety issues, and assist in providing greater protections for workers
- Despite ongoing discussions of JHSCs in the education sector, there are currently no established tools to assess their function and effectiveness
- The newly developed *JHSC Assessment Tool*, when tested with single-workplace JHSCs in the health sector, was found to be feasible, had high usability ratings and served as a guide for identifying areas of improvement among participating JHSCs



OBJECTIVE

- To assess the feasibility and usability of the *JHSC Assessment Tool* with multi-workplace JHSCs in the education sector

METHODS

- Ethics approval for this study was received from the University Health Network Research Ethics Board
- 59 participants from three Ontario school board multi-workplace JHSCs were invited to participate
- JHSC members used the tool to assess their JHSC at three different time points:

Pre-meeting

- JHSC members individually assessed their JHSC using the tool

During JHSC meeting

- A week later they worked through the tool as a committee during their regular JHSC meeting

Post-meeting

- A week after the meeting they completed the tool again individually

- Members of the research team observed and recorded the JHSC meeting
- Web-based usability surveys were also conducted before and after the observation meeting
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were used to assess feasibility and usefulness of the tool

ASSESSMENT TOOL

- 21-item, 16-page tool
- Items had a 5-point scale; each point represented a scaled state of functioning
- Participants were asked to identify the state that “best represented” their current committee
- At the end of the tool, participants identified their top 3 priorities for improving JHSC effectiveness

Sample Tool Item

1.0 APPROACHABILITY					
JHSC Feature	1	2	3	4	5
1a) JHSC member identification	There is no list of committee members readily available.	A list of committee members is readily available, but is not posted publicly (e.g. either on a notice board or online).	The list of names of committee members is posted in only one place (e.g. either on a notice board or online).	The list of names of committee members is posted in more than one location (e.g. either on a notice board or online). Changes to membership are not updated promptly.	The list of names of committee members is posted in more than one location (e.g. either on a notice board or online). Changes to membership are updated promptly.
Circle the description that best reflects your JHSC					
Comments					

RESULTS

Response Rate

- 48 participants recruited (81% response rate)
- 24 matched pairs analyzed
 - Pre- and post-meeting responses from the assessment tool and usability questionnaire



Feasibility Testing

- On average, committees completed the *JHSC Assessment Tool* in 60 minutes (*Mean*=59 minutes, *Range*=48-69 minutes) and came to consensus on 94% of items
- Time to consensus for items ranged from 22-666 seconds per question
- Top three priorities included: improved communication; increased member participation; promoting the JHSC

Usability Testing

- Results were positive with no score falling under 3.4 on the 5-point scale (Table 1)
- Paired analysis of pre- and post-scores for each item revealed no significant change (Table 1)
- No significant change between the pre- and post-individual ratings of JHSC effectiveness (Table 2)

Table 1: Paired analysis of usability scores (n=24)

Item	Pre		Post		Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	
The assessment tool was easy to understand.	4.33	0.76	4.17	0.64	0.257
The assessment tool was an appropriate length.	4.25	0.68	4.25	0.61	1.000
It would be of value for my JHSC to work through this tool.	4.17	0.76	4.17	0.82	1.000
The assessment tool highlighted responsibilities of JHSCs that I had previously not considered.	3.38	1.10	3.58	1.10	0.435
The assessment tool addressed all of the relevant issues for a gold standard JHSC.	3.54	1.06	3.83	1.01	0.070
I think this assessment tool could improve the way my JHSC currently operates.	3.92	0.83	3.92	0.83	1.000
I think this assessment tool could bring my JHSC closer to a gold standard.	3.92	0.72	4.04	0.69	0.479
I think this assessment tool could bring other JHSCs closer to a gold standard.	4.00	0.59	4.21	0.66	0.233
I would be interested in using this assessment tool with my JHSC.	4.21	0.72	3.83	0.96	0.059
I think my JHSC would have little to no difficulty coming to a consensus on many of these items.	3.63	0.92	3.75	0.94	0.601
If this tool highlighted limitations of my JHSC, I would be willing to work on addressing them.	4.54	0.66	4.42	0.58	0.377
My JHSC would benefit from a revised version of this tool that provided information and advice on how to address gaps we have identified.	3.92	0.88	3.92	0.83	1.000

Table 2: Paired analysis of assessment scores (n=24)

Item	Pre		Post		Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD	
JHSC member identification	4.79	0.51	4.58	0.58	0.170
JHSC member approachability	3.92	0.78	3.54	0.83	0.071
JHSC member participation during meetings	3.75	1.03	3.58	0.93	0.295
JHSC member attendance at meetings	4.33	0.48	4.29	0.46	0.747
JHSC member engagement and commitment to occupational health and safety	4.50	0.59	4.38	0.58	0.328
JHSC communicates occupational health and safety information to members of the workforce	3.58	1.18	3.71	1.16	0.657
Posting and distribution of the meeting minutes	4.13	1.08	4.04	1.12	0.714
Time to prepare for and attend JHSC meetings and carry out committee activities	4.54	0.78	4.33	0.70	0.203
Availability of occupational health and safety experts to your JHSC	4.17	0.76	4.04	1.00	0.479
Management addresses formal written recommendations from the JHSC	4.46	0.83	4.21	0.93	0.162
JHSC member training: Part I Basic Certification Training	4.63	0.50	4.58	0.50	0.575
JHSC member training: Part II Workplace-Specific Hazard Certification Training	4.25	0.53	4.29	0.55	0.664
Annual JHSC member training/education, in addition to certification training	3.67	0.92	3.46	1.18	0.260
Terms of reference	3.92	0.78	4.21	0.78	0.129
Meeting agendas	4.38	0.88	4.33	0.82	0.770
Workplace inspections	3.38	1.35	3.83	1.40	0.078
Participating in accident/injury investigations where a worker is killed or critically injured	4.13	1.03	4.25	1.18	0.497
Work refusals	4.27	1.10	4.13	0.92	0.499
Sharing reports with and consulting JHSC on occupational health and safety issues	4.50	0.89	4.25	0.94	0.185
Activities that your JHSC carries out to raise the profile of your committee and to communicate with workforce on occupational health and safety issues	3.08	0.97	3.08	0.97	1.000
Workers knowledge of the JHSC and perceptions of JHSC members as effective leaders for occupational health and safety	3.21	1.14	3.29	1.08	0.739

CONCLUSIONS

- The *JHSC Assessment Tool* was feasible to use during a regular JHSC meeting and was found to be useful in formative evaluations of JHSC functioning in the education sector
- The paired analysis revealed no significant changes, demonstrating that usability remained stable and did not change with further exposure and discussion.
- Participants were able to identify top priorities for improving their JHSC during the onsite use of the Tool
- Participants suggested several areas where the wording of the tool could be revised to be more relevant to a multi-workplace JHSC

NEXT STEPS

- Creation of a revised and web-based version of the *JHSC Assessment Tool* with added functionality and broad testing across multiple sectors