



	Title	Stakeholder survey of return-to-work barriers for workers with hand dermatitis
	Year	2002
Investigators	Linn Holness	
CREOD Research Program	Occupational Skin Disease	
Research Theme	Outcomes – RTW	
Funder	Unfunded	
Product Type	Survey	
Background	In spite of increased understanding of workplace exposures and occupational hygiene interventions, return-to-work (RTW) continues to be a problem for many workers with contact dermatitis (CD). There is little information available regarding barriers to RTW for workers with CD.	
Study Focus (Research Question/Goals/Methods)	Our goal was to identify and learn more about RTW barriers for workers with CD. For this study, we surveyed 21 occupational health and safety personnel during an occupational health and safety research conference. The participants were presented with 3 pictures of varying degrees of work-related hand CD, and asked to list the 3 key barriers or challenges in RTW for individuals with CD.	
Key Findings	<p>Participants identified 65 possible RTW barriers that fell into 8 major categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern of ongoing dermatitis (71%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. fear of re-exposure • Ability to do the job safely (52%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. inability to use required tools • Appearance (48%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. embarrassment, issues of self-esteem and body image • Workplace modifications (43%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. perceived inability to accommodate • Personal protective equipment (33%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. worry that it may get caught in machinery • Worker or co-worker fear that rash is contagious (24%) • Workplace attitudes (24%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E.g. management and/or coworkers unwilling to cooperate with RTW accommodations • Pain (14%) 	
Implications for Health/Labour Policy and Practice	While some of these issues are potentially common to RTW situations in general, others are more specific to <i>visible</i> health problems. Increased attention to these possible RTW barriers may lead to better RTW outcomes for workers with CD.	
Publication & Presentation Information	<p><u>Publications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holness DL. Return-to-work issues for workers with contact dermatitis: results of a stakeholder survey. <i>Contact Dermatitis</i> 2003;49:273-275. 	