

An Example of how Knowledge learn through Studies has resulted in Positive Impacts on Worker Health and Safety

Dr. Laura L. Roach DNP, FNP-BC

As a practitioner in any practice there are multiple examples of how knowledge gained from studies impacts worker health and safety. I recently attended the AAOHN conference in New Orleans. During this conference I had an opportunity to attend a lecture by Dr. Kevin Cuccaro titled, "What Everyone in Occupational Health Needs to Know About Pain." I learned that despite a significant increase in MRI, procedures, surgeries, and opioid prescriptions, our pain "problem" is not improving. This has had a significant impact on my occupational health practice. I take into account the patient's perception of pain along with the mechanism of injury and other factors. I do not jump to imaging studies as a means for diagnosis as quickly. I once again make the employee the center of treatment through listening and explaining the plan of care. I have noticed that patients have come to expect imaging studies to rule out fracture and various levels of trauma. Providers have set this precedent without explaining that the results may not clarify the origin of pain. I believe the most important piece of information I learned here is that despite the fact that we have the best medical devices at our disposal, we as providers are still incapable of explaining pain among other things. When we are honest with our patients and tell them we cannot explain the cause of their pain, we build an open and honest relationship with them. Building this kind of relationship is how we meet the needs of our patients.