

Editorial

Occupational Epidemiology

Epidemiologia Ocupacional

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I would like to start this editorial by thanking Suely Cardoso for the honorable invitation. As we enter another year of the ongoing pandemic, we can be encouraged by the increasing pace of the return-to-work schedule. Hopefully, this increased visibility in the workplace will encourage even more spontaneous conversations and research efforts that will yield future articles in the Revista de Medicina. We look forward to more spontaneous face-to-face meetings, engaging lunch conversations, and our collective journey into research.

Occupational epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of work-related illnesses and injuries. These diseases and injuries are preventable, and studying their epidemiology allows for an evidence-based approach to prevention by policymakers. Furthermore, harmful exposures at work can be conceptualized as a “natural experiment” in the cause of illness and injury, because the workplace generally has much better defined levels and timing of exposure than in the general community. Their study may therefore shed light on the causes and prevention of health problems in general. Work is also beneficial and lack of work is harmful, and occupational psychosocial “exposures” and outcomes are increasingly studied.

This journal brings together experts from a variety of specialties to cover topics of current interest. Traditional methods can be used to study 'new' occupational diseases as well as increase our understanding of 'old' ones. Major secular trends in society mean that occupational epidemiological methods are now applied to issues such as the aging of the workforce, returning to work after illness and the migration of workers. The

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epidemiological approach can be extended to new data sources such as surveillance systems. The high value of occupational epidemiology data is demonstrated in large-scale efforts to make the best use of the data through clustering and systematic reviews, and by their use in disease burden studies. New paradigms and concepts underpin and enhance statistical analyses, and the increasing application of health economics analyzes will strengthen communication with policy makers.

We hope that the journal will bring some of the interesting areas in which epidemiologists are active today to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.