



Reflecting Occupational Health in Times of Aging Societies

June 28–30, 2026 • University of Wuppertal, Germany

Across the globe, workforces are aging at an unprecedented pace. Longer working lives, demographic shifts, skills and personnel shortages, increased technology, and changing work environments are placing new and complex demands on workers, employers, and societies. Occupational Health (OH) plays a central role in safeguarding workers’ health and work ability – but is today’s OH practice truly prepared for the realities of aging societies?

Occupational Health systems differ widely between countries in terms of structure, resources, tasks, responsibilities, and influence. While in some systems OH is focused on preventive action, in others, sickness absence guidance and return to work is the focus of OH. The fundamental question is: Does current OH practice support sustainable and inclusive working lives for aging workers?

This international symposium will bring together leading experts, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to critically discuss how OH is responding to the challenges of aging societies – and how it might evolve for the future.

The symposium aims to

- Critically reflect on the role, scope, and effectiveness of OH in the context of aging workforces.
- Compare OH systems, policies, and practices across countries and regions.
- Identify gaps between societal needs and current OH practice and gaps between research and practice.
- Highlight innovative approaches that promote sustainable work ability, healthy aging at work, and prolonged working lives.

Key questions to be addressed include

- How is the role of OH defined and debated across different countries?
- How has OH adapted to demographic and societal change?
- Does current OH practice adequately support sustainable work ability for aging workers?
- What successful strategies and models exist that can be transferred internationally?

Who should attend?

The symposium is intended for an international audience from OH research and academia, policy and decision-making, OH and Safety professionals, occupational practice and implementation (employers or representatives from small and large enterprises).

Participation is free of charge. The number of participants is limited due to venue capacity.

Registration and contact: Lesley Brühn, arbwiss@uni-wuppertal.de

Link: <https://www.icohweb.org/sc/aging-and-work> - see Upcoming Events

Organized by the *International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Scientific Committee “Aging and Work”* Hans Martin Hasselhorn (Germany), Karin Proper (The Netherlands), and Jodi Oakman (Australia)

Keynote Lectures by



Prof. Riitta Sauni, Finland

Prof. Andrea Kaifie-Pechmann, Germany

Prof. Jodi Oakman, Australia

Dr. Erik Rodrigues Pereira, Netherlands





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Program

Sunday Evening (June 28)

Joint dinner for all participants at a pub in town

Monday Morning (June 29)

09:00 Welcome

09:30 Keynote 1

Prof. Jodi Oakman – “OH needs of older workers today”

10:30 Interactive session on the OH needs of older workers

12:30 Lunch

Monday Afternoon

13:30 Keynote 2

“Comparing OH systems – examples from the NL, D, and FIN”

Prof. Andrea Kaifie-Pechmann, Dr. Erik Rodrigues Pereira,
Prof. Riitta Sauni

14:30 Panel discussion with policy and industry

16:30 Poster presentations / poster walk

Monday Evening

Get-together

Tuesday Morning (June 30)

09:00 Keynote 3

Prof. Riitta Sauni – “I have a dream: OH in times of ageing societies”

10:00 Parallel sessions

11:30 Concluding discussion

12:30 End



Organizer

Department of
Occupational Health Science
University of Wuppertal, Germany

