

# Example of magazine nursing management article review

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## Section Name

Article: An Ergonomics Program for the Health Care Setting

In Bragg's "An Ergonomics Program for the Health Care Setting" (1996), he discusses the basic elements that are required to set up a formal ergonomics program in a health care context. In instances where health care workers are handling patients, the likelihood of experiencing back injuries is great (p. 58). With that in mind, management is required to deal with these types of injuries with health care workers by establishing a formal ergonomics program to provide prevention and care for these stressors. The article itself provides the elements that are required in order to establish such a program.

Bragg first notes the danger of material handling in health care facilities - materials being "patients" in this context (p. 58). Due to the many complications facing health care workers while handling these patients, given the need for care and comfort and the possibility of exposure to conditions, material handling in this particular occupation is stated to be much more complicated than in many others. The recent phenomenon of upper extremity cumulative trauma disorders (including carpal tunnel and other conditions) has made it necessary to take extra steps to safeguard workers' musculoskeletal health, requiring health care organizations to address these issues by implementing new policies that seek to prevent these types of ergonomic injuries from occurring in the first place (p. 58).

Bragg establishes the essential elements that are required for these programs. First, work site analysis is noted as a means to prioritize the most

extreme ergonomic hazards known to health care workers (p. 58). Secondly, hazard prevention and control need to be exercised, which is done through expert training of how to remove those factors that lead to back disorders. Teaching proper lifting and handling of patients is one means by which hazard prevention and control can be established, offering education on how to lower risk factors for back injuries (p. 59). Medical management of health care workers also helps to minimize risk factors of cumulative trauma disorders (p. 60).

These risk factors are said to be a combination of force, repetition, and awkward postures. Force involves the amount of effort that must be taken to move materials in any setting; in this context, the force needed to move patients from place to place. Repetition involves the types of motions that get repeated numerous times in a workplace; with health care, this is not seen to be a major problem but is still somewhat present. Finally, awkward postures involve postures that are not normal or comfortable for the body; health care work often leads workers to bend at the shoulder, twist their torso, and so on, leaving them more at risk for injury. As these relate to physical effort in the workplace, they must be addressed and factored into by any organization looking to incorporate an ergonomics program into their ordinary workings.

Overall, Bragg's article provides a very concise and straightforward assessment for creating ergonomics programs in any occupational setting. By pointing out the specific factors that lead to back injury and cumulative back disorders, readers are able to establish a framework by which to

address those factors in an ergonomic program for the workplace. Bragg's focus on the health care industry brings to light a subject that is seemingly ill-considered; bringing ergonomic considerations into the actual health care industry and its force of workers. Noting the extreme difficulty of health care work and the stresses it places on a worker's back and muscles, not to mention the importance of healthy nurses and health care workers in proper care of patients, Bragg emphasizes the need to lower risk factors for these workers.

## References

Bragg, T. L. (1996). An ergonomics program for the health care setting. *Nurs Manage* 27(7): 58-62.