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New PhD Student Position Now Available to Study Occupational Health in Agricultural Machinery Operators

Join an interdisciplinary team of researchers led by Dr Stephan Milosavljevic (Faculty, Primary Supervisor) and Dr Dena Burnett (Post-Doc, Co-supervisor) with the School of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Saskatchewan. In conjunction with the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, this highly practical team offers personalized mentorship and the opportunity to work both in-field and in-lab with agricultural producers in the field of occupational health. We currently have an opening for one PhD student to study the effect of noise and whole-body vibration exposure on the health of agricultural machinery operators through smart device app validation, in-field data collection, participant interviews and focus groups, statistical modeling, and knowledge translation.

Farm machinery operation is one of the most dangerous occupations in Canada. During daily tasks, machinery operators are exposed to high levels of occupational whole-body vibration and noise often exceeding safe occupational exposure limits, and contributing to the risk of equipment-related injuries, collisions, accidents and possibly death. Negative health effects related to vibration and noise exposure include low back and musculoskeletal pain, cognitive impairment, loss of concentration and reaction time, and disturbances to balance and body awareness. These health deficiencies, and associated injuries and accidents, may be preventable if operators have accessible tools to measure and monitor exposure levels, as well as practical evidence-based in-field strategies to aid in reducing these exposures. The overall aim of our work is to develop practical, evidence-based, feasible, and producer-demonstrated strategies to reduce the negative health effects of on-farm vibration and noise exposure related to agricultural machinery use.

The applicant should have a Master's Degree in Physiotherapy, Health Sciences, Community Health and Epidemiology, Public Health, Agriculture, Biological or Biomedical Engineering, Kinesiology, or a related field. Familiarity in research in one or more of the following areas will be considered as assets: occupational health, ergonomics, health exposure risk assessment, rehabilitation science, industrial health and safety, and mixed-methods analysis. Knowledge of data analysis and interpretation using statistical software is required. This project will involve on-farm and in-field data collection; although not required, a farming or agricultural background will be considered a strong asset. The successful applicant will also require a Class 5 Saskatchewan Driver's License (or equivalent), either currently obtained or in the process of obtaining upon position start.

The applicant should be independent, self-motivated, and will be expected to be able to perform tasks with minimal to modest supervision after receiving appropriate training. Applicants must be detail oriented, possess strong organizational and interpersonal skills, and be understanding of the flexibility and pragmatism required to implement methodological modifications during in-field data collection where necessary. Successful applicants will be expected to apply for external funding opportunities. Anticipated start would be either September 2023 or January 2024.

Applicants should send the following documents to Dr Stephan Milosavljevic, stephan.milosavljevic@usask.ca:

- Current CV with list of publications and research experience,
- Transcripts (unofficial accepted),
- Contact information for 2 references, one of whom should be a previous research supervisor,
- Short statement of how your interests and career goals may be a match for this position.

Applicants are required to apply and be admitted to the Health Sciences graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan to fill the position. Candidates whose first language is not English may be required to provide a certificate of English proficiency. Admission requirements can be found on the CGPS website (https://cgps.usask.ca/).