

EU OSHA E-TOOLS WEBINAR 2021

Occupational safety and health OSH app revisited- MSD apps

Virtual meeting, 28 & 29 September 2021

E-tools webinar introduction

This webinar replaced the event originally scheduled to take place in 2020, as part of a series of annual seminars that EU-OSHA holds on e-tools. The theme for this webinar was Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), and it is linked to the ongoing European Healthy Workplaces Campaign “Lighten the load” that has been launched in October 2020. EU-OSHA first held an E-tools seminar on phone apps 5 years ago. This webinar revisited the topic of phone apps, but this time only focusing on MSD phone apps and focusing on new developments. It provided a good opportunity to revisit the phone app, given the advances in their use since the previous seminar.

The main goal of the webinar was to share experiences and information on recent developments regarding MSD Mobile phone apps. Through presentations of examples of phone apps covering different aspects of MSD risk assessment and prevention the challenges and success factors for the development of MSD apps were discussed, as well as future opportunities. The meeting also aimed to identify the diversity of tools; stimulate the use of e-tools as part of the OSH repertoire for prevention; and facilitate liaison in this area between OSH institutes in Member States.

In the seminar the same format was followed as previous years, starting with 3 presentations on day 1 followed by a participative Q&A session with the speakers, and another 3 presentations on day 2 discussed in a Q&A session on day 2. Finally, conclusions from both sessions were presented on day 2.

By presenting a variety of MSD apps, we provided the opportunity to the audience to be able *to compare and contrast the different tools* that will be described, considering:

- Where they fit into the prevention process (e.g. use by employer, worker, specialist, other), in risk assessment, diagnosis of problems, identification of preventive measures
- Drivers and barriers for the app use
- Benefits and drawbacks of the use of such apps – for employers, workers, prevention and medical services, labour inspectorates
- Possibilities for using data from e-tools to influence and drive policy and practice
- Possible future changes to be expected (technological developments, new areas for integration) in the context of the apps;

Attendees were invited via the FOP network including social partners and Commission, as well as other interested groups (e.g. SLIC, ILO).

Viewpoints, practices, and experiences were shared in the seminar and also there were opportunities for networking for collaboration in the future.

Presentations and discussion of the MSD apps.

All presentations of the seminar have been attached in this Seminar Online Summary (SOS). First, EU-OSHA (William Cockburn, Annick Starren) welcomed the participants and introduced the webinar: its goals and format, background of the development of e-tools in the EU context and as well a first link to the ongoing campaign has been provided.

In the first session 3 apps on Manual Handling were presented, and discussed afterwards:

- “Heben und tragen” (“lifting and carrying”) by Michaela Strebl – AUVA, Austria
- “AERMES-sicurezza app on manual handling risk evaluation” by Gabriella Duca - ISSNOVA, Italy
- “Painpoint ergonomic assessment app (body mapping)” by Daryl Stephenson – OHCOW/CCOHS, Canada

In the second session on day 2, the next 3 MSD apps were presented and discussed.

- “EUlift app on MSD’s in Health sector” by Aline Ollevier – Vives University, Belgium, and Sylvie Schiettekatte – Athlon, Spain;
- “Experiences of collaborating with the private sector/companies to develop apps (hairdressing sector)” by Tony Woolf – EU/International
- “Calculador y APP: **Carga Física Identificación**” (“Physical loads apps”) by Teresa Alvarez Bayona INSST, Spain.

Conclusions of the discussion sessions

Very interesting discussions took place in the 2 Q&A sessions, on aspects related to the user profile of the apps and his/her working context (e.g. knowledge level, sectors, workplace characteristics (e.g. SME’s versus large companies)), the scientific base and background knowledge, purpose of the use, limitations of the use, implementation issues and testing, training, facilitating factors enhancing the use, usability, collaboration (e.g public /private) and maintenance (update management), and sustainability and efficacy (impact). Also ‘new issues came across, e.g social media reviewing, gamification to enhance worker participation, privacy issues/ employers role and trend analysis, role of inspection/policy integration (integration of standards/compliance), and last but not least the specific use of e-tools in themes of Teleworking.

The discussions were very participative and vivid, and except from the sharing of insights and knowledge of the specific tools, this led to the following general findings and conclusions:

E-tools are part of the solution – not a stand-alone solution

- They have to be part of a package including e.g. training, support
- What they should do, for whom, and why should be clear
- Not all workplaces have ICT access: Support still needed

E-tools need to be sustainable

- Embedded in a long-term programme / strategy
- This gives policy base, political support, funding
- Need to adapt to technological and legal / scientific change

Successful e-tools have buy-in from all stakeholders

- Engage from planning phase to evaluation
- Involve users in testing/ design in “real world” context
- Private sector approaches may differ from public sector

An e-tool processes data to give a tailored output

- With scientific / technical basis
- But rubbish in – rubbish out

E-tools have to have a scientific / technical base

- Build on existing instruments/tools, products/guides

Not all e-tools' primary goal is to feed into the risk assessment process

- Also for awareness raising, training, diagnostics, “mainstreaming”...

Complexity of e-tools can depend on the knowledge / skills of end user

- Tool should be specific for and tailored to the intended user
- All tools should be appealing to use and have low barrier for entry

The output has to be accessible and understandable for end-user

- Gamification to encourage use
- The end-user should be able to see what to do next (in a treatment or prevention approach) - an “action perspective”

Data protection is vital – especially when dealing with medical data

- This can limit use transferability / storage / use of data
- Be clear over data use - Anonymised metadata can be very useful

Integrated approach can provide real benefits

- Cross-platform use can provide significant added value
- Ability to transfer data between system

The weblinks to the apps:

OSH-apps seminar 2015: <https://osha.europa.eu/en/tools-and-resources/seminars/e-tools-event-osh-phone-apps>

Heben und tragen:

<https://www.auva.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.759846&portal=auvaportal&viewmode=content>

AERMES: www.aermes.issnova.eu

PAINPOINT: https://www.ccohs.ca/products/pain_point/

EUIift: https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/EUIift_app

L'Oreal: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/15-coach-lor%C3%A9al-pro/id1106342234>

<https://www.hairdressing.uk/products/app-designed-tackle-musculoskeletal-disorders>

INSST: <https://www.insst.es/documentacion/catalogo-de-publicaciones/calculador-y-app-carga-fisica-identificacion>