

OSHE AND THE MEDIA

By Orlando Scott, (Barbados Workers' Union)



OSHE & THE MEDIA

- OSHE – traditionally the “poor relation” in I.R in Barbados.
- Trade unionists and workers traditionally negotiated for better wages to the neglect of working conditions.
- Improvements in OSH in collective agreements were basic PPE – gloves, goggles, aprons, overalls; and limited WELFARE provisions: potable water, rest areas.

OSHE & THE MEDIA

- Employers and society generally did not rank OSHE as a core organizational value alongside finance, customer service and productivity.
- Also, the linkage between OSH&E was blurred and/or not understood.
- Employers regarded OSHE as a nuisance or cost.

FATALITIES IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

- Tractors overturning and crushing drivers
 - absence of protective hoods
 - seconds seated on tractor fenders
 - multiple trailers
 - misuse of agrochemicals – chemical spraying without training or PPE.

EMPHASIS ON “SAFETY”

- Little attention paid to health.
- Saw the need for a national campaign to build public awareness through the media.
- Education and training.

OSHE & THE MEDIA

- 1978 - joined BWU staff as PRO.
- Served as News Editor at daily newspaper.
- 1979 - started to host 1st of 2 trade union radio shows.
- 1981 - attended first OSHE course, sponsored by UNDP in Georgetown.
- 1982 - Dr. Alan Le Serve was posted to Eastern Caribbean as a OSH Consultant.

OSHE & THE MEDIA

- Assigned to work with Dr. Le Serve.
- Conducted radio interviews with Dr. Le Serve.
- Started to use radio shows as media to highlight OSHE in Barbados and globally.
- Discussant on national television.
- In 1996, first publication of the Unionist.
- Every edition contains OSH news.

OSHE & THE MEDIA

- Sit on OSH boards
- PAHO Task Force on CNCDS (Chronic Non-communicable Diseases)
- HIV/AIDS Commission
- National Advisory Committee on OSH
- RAMCID (Risk Analysis and Monitoring Committee on Industrial Development)
- Commission on CNCDS
- Focussed on OSHE more broadly to include health:
 - CNCDS, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS

OSHE & THE MEDIA

- STARTED PUBLICATION OF TRADE UNION MAGAZINE IN JANUARY 1996
 - 2ND EDITION, FEBRUARY - RAN A STORY ON “HEALTH ON WOMEN’S AGENDA”
 - OSH MONTH OF ACTIVITIES – MAY 1996

PUBLICATIONS



The Way forward for the HIV/AIDS Response in Barbados



Dr. Henrik Urie, Chairman, National HIV/AIDS Commission, Barbados

Barbados discovered the presence of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus in its midst when two people were found with it in 1984. Since then, twenty-six (26) years ago, more than three thousand (3,000) have contracted the virus. Approximately two thousand (2,000) have become sick (developed Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or AIDS). The history of this disease shows a death or mortality rate of about sixty percent (60%). In the early days of the infection, males far outnumbered the females, 4 to 1; now that has declined to 2 to 1. However, the death rate, although people with AIDS are offered free drug treatment, remains 3 to 1, males to females. These, mostly infected, are between the ages of fifteen (15) and forty-nine (49) years, about seventy percent (70%), with the subgroup fifteen (15) to twenty-four (24), showing more females infected than males. An analysis of this subgroup, borne out by recent research has shown a significant degree

of transactional and intergenerational sexual relations; young women having "sex" with older men.

Since 1995, Barbados has offered drug treatment to infected pregnant women and has been able to reduce the transmission of the virus to the unborn and newborn from thirty percent (30%) to less than ten percent (10%). Over the last four (4) years, no newborn has emerged HIV positive. However, more people continue to become infected.

Anti Retroviral Treatment

While the free Anti Retroviral treatment offered by the Government, with the aid of the World Bank, since 2002, has allowed those with AIDS to live longer (increased mortality of about 50%), yet the combined effect has been to have an enlarging number of persons living with HIV infection and AIDS (PLWHA). However, all those who need treatment do not receive it. As persons live longer with this virus, and acquire the common diseases of aging, the world is facing the additional challenge of determining the real effect of AIDS and its treatment on these diseases and vice versa. AIDS was first discovered in 1981, and HIV, the causative agent in 1983. Still, a somewhat emerging disease, (the virus continues to mutate) the real effect could not be fully realised yet.

With more people requiring treatment, and external funding dwindling, the treatment programme in its current form is unsustainable. Clearly, the answer lies in prevention. Arguably the response is at the crossroads.

Strategies

Many strategies at prevention have been tried by the many organisations working in the

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SMOKE-FREE WORKSITES = BETTER HEALTH

The record shows that the implementation of smoke-free workplaces leads to better health.

According to the July-September 2010 edition of HAZARDS Magazine, there were fewer hospital admissions for heart attacks in England in the year after July 2007, when the smoking ban came in, a major study suggests.

The study reveals that after the implementation of smoke-free legislation there was a statistically significant drop of 2.4 per cent in the number of emergency admissions for myocardial infarction. This implies that just over 1 200 emergency admissions for myocardial infarction were prevented over a 12-month period. The fall was not as pronounced as those observed in studies of bans introduced elsewhere.



Comrade Neville Kirton, Chairman of the Barbados Workers' Union's Safety and Health Committee.

From October 1, 2010, smoking will be illegal in public places in Barbados, and Comrade Neville Kirton, Chairman of the Barbados Workers' Union's Safety and Health Committee, is hoping that Barbados would experience even greater success than had been attained in England and elsewhere. Comrade Kirton, who is a Vice President of the BWU and a bus operator at the Transport Board, is of the view that the ban on smoking would lead to healthier workers and also lead to the reduction of discomfort and ill health among the workforce, especially among workers who are employed in bars, night clubs, restaurants and shops, where smoking may be a common pastime.

Statistically there was a fall in hospital admissions for myocardial infarction in England, retrospective analysis of hospital admissions for myocardial

WELLNESS WORKSHOP

Thirty-four members of joint safety and health committees representing the Transport Board, National Conservation Commission, Port Authority Inc., Barbados Water Authority and Supercentre Limited convened at the BWU Labour College from June 29 to July 1, at a workshop, entitled "BWU on the Move for Wellness", to map out a wellness strategy for their respective workplaces.

During the workshop, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Health's Health Promotion Unit and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc., the participants heard presentations on topics ranging from "Preventative Measures and Physical Signs of Stroke" (Dr. David Corbin), "Stroke Rehabilitation" (Dr. Woody Maynard), "What are Chronic-non Communicable Diseases and how they can be prevented",

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BWU PRAISES GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO BAN SMOKING

The Barbados Workers' Union (BWU) has praised Government's move to ban the smoking of tobacco products in public places, effective 1st October, 2010.

Health Minister the Honourable Donville Inniss made the announcement at a recent meeting attended by the medical practitioners, employees, trade unionists, civil servants and NGOs.

The banning of smoking in public places in Barbados has been an issue for the Barbados Workers' Union for some time now. This concern received wider public attention when a resolution on the same was moved by a member of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Workers at the Union's 67th Annual Delegates' Conference.

Workers in the Hospitality Sector have been particularly outspoken on the matter of the smoking of tobacco products in public places, since they suffer the consequences of side stream smoke, exhaled by smokers in bars.

House-keeping staff in the Hospitality Sector are also affected since they have to clean rooms and handle cigarette butts and ash.

There is much evidence to substantiate the claims by proponents of the ban that cigarette smoking can cause serious health problems and even death.

Two of the physicians who attended the meeting, Professor Trevor Hassell, Chairman of the Commission for Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases and Professor Timothy Roach addressed the health impacts of cigarette smoking.



Professor Trevor Hassell

Orlando Scott, the BWU's representative on the Commission for Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases welcomed the ban; and supported the Ministry's proposal to launch a national public relations programme to inform Barbadians and visitors alike on the legislation.



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➤ Thank You

➤ Any Questions??

