

Whaowhia te kete mātauranga | Fill the basket with knowledge

Guest editorial

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This journal was developed to provide a *kete aronui* – a basket of knowledge of health and safety practice in Aotearoa New Zealand and elsewhere. It intends to provide open access to multidisciplinary research on health, safety, and wellbeing in workplaces. Similarly, this journal is intended to support students, practitioners, researchers, regulatory agencies, politicians, and policy makers, enabling them to access current and relevant industry insights.

As the current President of the New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM), I am acutely aware of the crucial role health and safety professionals and practitioners have in safeguarding our workplaces. Excellence in this field does not happen by accident. It requires a continuous commitment to professional development, a dedication that benefits both practitioners and the profession as a whole.

Ongoing learning ensures health and safety professionals stay abreast of the latest regulations, emerging hazards, and best practices. Industry standards are constantly evolving, and innovative technologies present both opportunities and risks for effective practice. By actively engaging in workshops, conferences, and accredited training programs, professionals and practitioners can refine their technical skills, gain valuable insights from peers, and ensure their knowledge base remains current.

Ultimately, professional development and continuing education improve the health and safety professions by enhancing our credibility and impact. As our expertise deepens, so does our ability to advocate for evidence-based practices and influence safety protocols at all levels. This positions us as trusted advisors, not just enforcers, and empowers us to create a future where safe and healthy workplaces are the norm, not the exception.

This inaugural issue of the New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice acts as an introduction to the breadth of challenges and developments in the field of health and safety around the motu, the country of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Notably, our first article covers coffee, a favourite beverage of New Zealanders. The coffee processing industry in New Zealand has seen significant growth, with large imports of unroasted coffee beans. However, little is known about workers' exposure levels in this industry to volatile organic compounds and their potential impact on worker health. These compounds are formed during the roasting process and have been linked to respiratory ill-health, particularly obliterative bronchiolitis. This study is believed to be the first in New Zealand to measure personal exposure of coffee processing workers to alpha-diketones and sheds light on potential occupational hazards previously overlooked. The findings underscore the need for heightened industry awareness. As the first of its kind in New Zealand, the study contributes crucial insights for safeguarding worker health in the coffee processing industry.

New Zealand has had its share of workplace tragedies: Ballantynes fire (1947), Strongman Mine explosion (1967), Cave Creek disaster (1995), Mangatepopo canyon tragedy (2008), Pike River Mine disaster (2010) and the volcanic eruption of Whakaari/White Island (2019). Zanini provides a qualitative analysis exploring the origins of the Whakaari/White Island disaster in New Zealand's adventure tourism industry, drawing from sociological theories of risk, particularly systems thinking. She raises questions for both professionals and those in authority regarding how the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) influences the workplace health and safety ecosystem. The analysis suggests that the safety culture within the adventure tourism industry in New Zealand needs improvement. Zanini also suggests that ACC may inadvertently encourage greater risk-taking due to the risk-compensation dynamic, and the study recommends enhanced oversight to foster a safer environment within the adventure tourism sector. Furthermore, it suggests that authorities should investigate the extent to which insurance coverage influences business practices in our industries.

Both of these articles highlight the need for us to focus on deepening our understanding of how health and safety impact our workplaces, and a need to continuously examine and critique the work that we do, and that of those who have broader influence across New Zealand.

The articles by Knobel (leadership), Dearsly (cultural intelligence), Davis (operational risk profiling) and Peace (integrated management systems) suggest gaps in understanding and targeted interventions.

This edition provides practitioners and professionals with novel approaches, drawing from sociological theories of risk and systems-thinking, and give us fresh insights. The articles suggest opportunities for future research exploring factors influencing safety culture and the efficacy of regulatory mechanisms.

This inaugural edition of the New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice serves as a valuable precursor for further exploration of health and safety practices across Aotearoa New Zealand. Future editions promise to deepen our understanding of this critical area. Our thanks to all the authors for their contributions to this inaugural edition and to the anonymous reviewers for their work.

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