

For Immediate Release

**U OF U RESEARCHERS LAND \$1.45M GRANT TO CONTINUE
LARGEST STUDY EVER TO IDENTIFY RISK FACTORS FOR CARPAL
TUNNEL SYNDROME, TENNIS ELBOW AND SHOULDER TENDINITIS**

SALT LAKE CITY-Researchers at the University of Utah School of Medicine and the University of Wisconsin have won a \$1.45 million grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to continue and add to an ongoing study to identify risk factors for carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow and shoulder tendinitis.

The study is the largest ever for an epidemiological study of the three disorders.

"We are eager to continue this critical research to identify the factors to prevent these problems," said Kurt T. Hegmann, M.D., M.P.H., research associate professor of family and preventive medicine and the study's epidemiologist and co-principal investigator. "This study will be the mechanism to both quantify the risk factors, as well as to provide the information to develop effective programs to prevent these problems."

The three-year study will follow more than 1,000 workers from Utah and Wisconsin to determine risk factors

for carpal tunnel syndrome (a pinched nerve in the wrist), tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis, a type of tendinitis), shoulder tendinitis, and other upper extremity musculoskeletal disorders. The continuation of this project will allow the addition of shoulder tendinitis to the research project as well as to more precisely define the risk factors for all of the disorders.

The project will:

- Analyze the workers' jobs in detail.
- Follow workers over the length of the study.
- Analyze job factors that predict development of carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, shoulder tendinitis, and other musculoskeletal disorders.
- Validate existing job analysis methods.
- Construct new job analytical methods that could be utilized in a broad array of industries to prevent these diseases.

The Utah site will be based at the U of U's Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational & Environmental Health. The medical school's Departments of Family & Preventive Medicine and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, University Hospital's Hand Clinic, and the Department of Mechanical Engineering will assist in the study.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Medical
College of Wisconsin will collaborate on the study, too.

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