

student finds fit with work and health

After completing her master's degree in Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Toronto and working as an Occupational Hygienist at the Hospital for Sick Children, Sophia Berolo developed a growing interest in the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) in the workplace. "I knew I wanted to enter the field of work-related MSD research and prevention," explains Berolo. "It was a challenge to find a program at the doctoral level that fit well with these interests, that is, until Waterloo launched its new interdisciplinary PhD program in Work and Health."

It was a unique multidisciplinary approach to the prevention of MSDs that first attracted Sophia to the work of Dr. Richard Wells, Director of Waterloo's Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders (CRE-MSD). She admired the Centre's exceptional use of both basic research and workplace intervention-based investigations to identify important questions and build knowledge to support sustainable solutions for preventing MSDs in the workplace.



Sophia began the Work and Health program in September 2008, its inaugural year, with Dr. Wells as her advisor. The team is currently investigating the prevalence of hand and upper limb symptoms among mobile hand-held device users — the first known study of its kind. The results will not only shed light on the frequency of such concerns in the workforce but will lay the foundation for prevention strategies such as recommendations on use or the design of devices.

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