To: Erika Paterson, Professor, University of British Columbia

From: Alanna Mckeigue, Student, University of British Columbia

Date: June 14, 2021

Subject: Proposal for reducing occupational musculoskeletal disorders by implementing extracurricular yoga.

**Introduction**

In the dental industry, there is a high risk for developing occupational musculoskeletal disorders (MSD’s). Estimated population of dental professionals that suffer from MSDs is 79%; these include: dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and receptionists. MSDs is mainly caused by the prolonged time of maintaining a static posture or producing repetitive movements in the dental setting.

Aerobic exercise is said to be the best in prevention of an MSD. It is recommended to be practiced three to four times a week for at least twenty minutes to increase blood flow to the tissues in the body and improve their ability to use oxygen. Complimented with an stress-reduction technique such as breathing techniques, meditation, or massage it will create everlasting health for body and mind.

**Statement of Problem**

Musculoskeletal disorders are produced from the prolonged static posture or repetition of the same movement daily over a long period of time. With inadequate strengthening or stretching of of those muscles and facia (connective tissue), there is a very high risk of developing a MSD. This is not restricted to dentists, but subject to any career in the dental field. At the dental clinic I practice at, two dental hygienists have undergone radiofrequency rhizotomy (a surgery that inherently burns small nerves in the neck to reduce pain), which only treats the pain and not the problem itself. That being said, there is a direct relationship between decreased fitness levels and MSD. A challenge that is faced working a full-time career is the varying hours of fitness or yoga studios to access these classes, excluding the new regulations from COVID 19.

**Proposed Solution**

A proposal for the solution of developing an MSD is a pilot project for the dental clinic, I work at, that would implement an extracurricular yoga class once per week for the dental staff. To accommodate the entire staff it would be a relaxation or yin yoga class that is directed at the neck, upper and lower back. This would be a private class for the dental staff to provide comfort with the new regulations of COVID 19, as it is a small clinic. To be accessible to the workplace, the studio will be no further than a five minute walk. Time of the class will be determined by the dental staff.

**Scope**

To assess feasibility of creating a pilot project for an extracurricular yoga class for the dental staff to decrease the risk of developing an MSD, I would pursue six areas of inquiry:

1. Would people feel comfortable attending a class after hours with the office staff?
2. What is the interest in the office to attend an extracurricular yoga class?
3. What would the cost for a private class for the office be?
4. Is the cost manageable for the office budget?
5. Is there a studio or space that would be willing to either put on a class or rent the space?
6. What time would be most suitable for a class? Morning, afternoon, or evening?

**Methods**

My primary research methods will be an anonymous survey to the dental staff to inquire about interest in attending an extracurricular yoga class. I will also perform proposals to multiple yoga studios in the area to assess the accessibility of a yoga class.

Secondary sources will include research studies on the percentage of dental staff developing MSD’s, different types of MSD’s, and prevention strategies of MSD’s that will be handed out before the anonymous survey to inform the dental staff.

**My Qualifications**

Being an activist of health and prevention, I have attended many forms of yoga classes in my area. I am acquainted with many yoga instructors and studios, which allows me to connect with these professionals and foresee any possibility of producing a private class or renting a space for yoga. If there was no accessible teachers, I am a qualified yoga teacher in that I could teach classes if there was a space provided.

**Conclusion**

Clearly, a solution is needed to provide an accessible option for prevention of a Musculoskeletal disorder. By addressing the six areas of inquiry as mentioned above, I can determine the feasibility of the pilot project of an extracurricular yoga class, modified for MSD and stress-related muscle tension, available to the dental clinic. With your approval I will begin research.