

Physical classification. The labor market simply cannot supply all physically perfect workers. In fact, the percentage of workers in perfect health is extremely low. The working population now includes more persons with disabilities than ever before. Advances in medical science now prolong the lives of many who would have died of war injuries, or of illnesses, such as tuberculosis, diabetes, and heart disease. Accidents in industry, in traffic, and in the home continue to increase the number of handicapped persons.

Because of his proximity to the problem and his regular plant inspections, the company's physician should have a better understanding of the job requirements than other physicians. Therefore, it is his responsibility to provide management with clear recommendations on the employability, limited employability, or nonemployability of applicants for jobs.

Many systems of classification are now in use. Generally, however, these systems use broad statements, such as "physically fit for any work", "defect that limits applicant to certain jobs" (the defect may or may not be correctible, but may require medical supervision), and "defect that requires medical attention and is presently handicapping". This disqualifies a person for any type of employment.

Another method provides a greater range in expression of limiting factors, allowing more alternatives for the individual case.

Yet another method, which approaches the ultimate in functional evaluation of the individual, appraises capacities on a form with the identical terminology used in evaluating the physical or functional factors and working conditions of jobs (Fig. 40-6). This effective method of presenting information from a physical examination clearly indicates the specific work capability and limitations of the individual. Thus the medical report is more meaningful to the placement officer because the examining physician indicates ability or limitations with respect to each job factor. The examining physician, then, is responsible for determining the occupational significance of physical disorders.

This now makes proper job evaluation important. That is, employers must be aware

of the physical requirements of jobs and the accident and health hazards involved. Each job-appraisal factor has a direct relationship which makes it either definitely unsuitable or potentially undesirable for one or more types of disability. The factors to be considered in job appraisal are physical demands, working conditions, health hazards, and accident hazards.

Physical demands include agility, strength, exertion, vision, hearing, talking, sitting, standing, walking, running, climbing, crawling, kneeling, squatting, stooping, twisting, lifting, and handling. They should be evaluated according to quality of ability and duration of activity. For example, a job involving a considerable amount of stair climbing is unsuitable for workers with heart disease, respiratory diseases, obesity, or lower limb orthopedic disorders, but a small amount of stair climbing may be tolerated.

Working conditions include indoors, outdoors, excessive heat or cold, excessive humidity or dryness, wetness, sudden temperature changes, ventilation, lighting, noise, whether the work is performed alone, near others, with others, or as shift work or piece work. Some of these conditions could have a harmful influence upon certain disabilities. For example, work in excessive heat is generally unsuitable for persons who have had malaria, or for those with high blood pressure, heart disease, skin disease, the aged, and the obese.

Health hazards include air pressure extremes, radiant energy (ultraviolet, infrared, radium emanations, and X rays), silica, asbestos, dusts, and skin irritants, respiratory irritants, systemic poisons, and asphyxiants. These hazards have serious effects and can aggravate a preexisting bodily defect. For example, a job might involve exposure to respiratory irritants of insignificant quantities to a normal person, yet this condition might aggravate the disability of a person who has chronic bronchitis.

Accident hazards include danger of falls from elevations, work on moving surfaces, slipping and tripping hazards, exposure to vehicles or moving objects, falling objects