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During the Iraq War, the BBC deployed over 300 journalists and support staff – all of whom needed preparation and support from the in-house OH team. Occupational physician Dr Dipti Patel describes the physical, biological and psychological hazards faced by BBC staff in Iraq, and the work involved in meeting the OH challenges.

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Workplace drug and alcohol testing is one of the most contentious issues in occupational health and employment relations. Dr John Harrison reviews the arguments for and against testing and the evidence of its impact in safety, performance and attendance management.

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Following professional codes of conduct and keeping up to date with current knowledge and practice will go a long way to ensuring professional competence, says legal correspondent Diana Kloss.

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The role of sick notes in absence management has come under fire from many GPs. But should they be scrapped altogether? General practitioner Dr George Moncrieff says sick notes are archaic; occupational physician Dr Jim Ford says GPs are crucial in rehabilitation for work and argues for a more intelligent sick note system.

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The pay and benefits of OH professionals, and how they compare regionally, by profession, qualifications and gender, are detailed in this exclusive survey carried out by OH at Work in association with AXA PPP Healthcare. In part one, Paul Suff analyses the responses from 468 OH nurses, occupational physicians, hygienists and H&S practitioners.

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