

## **(SP) WORKSITE HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMMES IN TOKYO METROPOLITAN AREA**

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### **Context**

Most Japanese companies face increasing health care costs, aging of employees, an increasingly demanding business environment, an increase in “lifestyle” disease, and an increase in premature death among their employees. Therefore, more and more companies are becoming aware of the importance of health promotion for their workforce.

Worksite health promotion programmes may reduce employee costs for insurance premiums, disability benefits, and medical expenses. Additional benefits for employers include increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, improved morale, enhanced company image, and enhanced recruitment (O'Donnell, 2002). Therefore, worksite health promotion could enhance health status and quality of life of the Japanese workers.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze awareness and needs for worksite health promotion and resources for implementing it among top executives of corporations in the Tokyo metropolitan area.

### **Methods**

In this study, we conducted a survey in the form of a questionnaire from August 10 to 31, 2005. Questionnaires were sent out to top executives of all corporations which is affiliated with Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (n=72,438). Questionnaire items included company profiles, current status of employees' health and worksite health promotion policy as well as health behavior of the respondent. The response rate was 5.6% (n=4040).

### **Results**

The main results are as follows:

1. Ninety-five percent of respondents recognized the importance of worksite health promotion.
2. Finance business demonstrated an upward trend in the ratio of employees with mental disorder.
3. Of worksite, 59 percent offered disease prevention program, 24 percent offered physical activity and fitness program, 20 percent offered mental health program, and 12 percent offered nutrition program.

Of worksites that offered activities to promote physical activity and fitness, more than half offered sporting events (52 percent), followed by outside fitness facilities (40 percent), supporting sports club activities (31 percent), offering gymnastic exercise to the music on the radio (28 percent), offering information on health and fitness (22 percent), and having onsite fitness facilities or equipment.

4. Of worksite offered health promotion programs, outcomes of worksite health promotion were identified as follows;
  - Improved attitude and morale (38 percent)
  - Improved workplace communication (31 percent)
  - Lowered absenteeism (28 percent)

- Improved office atmosphere (22 percent)
- No change (20 percent)
- Improved employee health (19 percent)
- Improved company performance (18 percent)
- Improved productivity (18 percent)

Details from the results will be discussed further at the conference.

### **Implications**

The future of worksite health promotion in Japan is promising because almost all the respondents acknowledged importance of worksite health promotion and identified positive outcomes of it. However, still few corporations are implementing well-organized health promotion programs for their employees.

### **References**

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