
Strategic Management on Occupational Health in Workplace

Prof. Eunsuk Choi, PhD, MPH, COHN-S, RN

Kyungpook National University College of Nursing
President-elect of the Korean Academic Society of Occupational Health
Nursing

11 Key functions of an Occupational Health Service(WHO Regional Office Europe, 2002)

1. Identification and assessment of the health risk in the workplace.
2. Surveillance of work environment factors and work practices that affect workers' health, including sanitary installations, canteens and housing, when such facilities are provided by the employer.
3. Participation in the development of programs for the improvement of working practices, as well as testing and evaluating health aspects of new equipment.
4. Advice on planning and organisation of work, design of workplaces, choice and maintenance of machinery, equipment and substances used at work
5. Advice on occupational health, safety and hygiene, and on ergonomics and individual and collective protective equipment.
6. Surveillance of workers' health in relation to work.
7. Promoting the adaptation of work to the worker.
8. Collaboration in providing information, training and education in the fields of occupational health, hygiene and ergonomics.
9. Contribution to measures of vocational rehabilitation.
10. Organisation of first aid and emergency treatment.
11. Participation in the analysis of occupational accidents and occupational diseases

Economic benefits of workplace health management

- improves sustainable development at a national and enterprise level
- helps to protect the economic independence of the working population
- improved integration of disabled people into the economically active workforce
- increased productivity, competitiveness and profitability
- increased probability of economic investment
- improved self-regulation and adjustment of insurance system to seek benefits of preventives activities
- increase probability of reduced social insurance premium
- increase probability of reduced costs of health care system
- more efficient use of existing knowledge and skills
- improved economic stability

Health benefits of workplace health management

- increase life expectancy
- increase disability-free life expectancy
- increase working ability
- increased age of employees' working potential
- increase proportion of employees free from occupational and work related diseases and injuries
- increase percentage of employees and pensioners free from serious disability due to chronic communicable diseases
- increased proportion of society with healthy lifestyle
- increased equity in health between different professions, economic sectors and countries

Social and wellbeing benefits of workplace health management

(WHO. *The Role of the Occupational Health Nurse in Workplace Health Management*. Report No. EUR/01/5025463. Copenhagen, Denmark: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2001)

- improved social image of enterprise
- improved self-esteem of employees
- increased quality of working life
- improved compliance with existing legislation
- increase employment opportunities for people with slight work disability due to chronic diseases or injuries
- increased participation of employees in organization of their own work
- increased awareness of society on social, environmental, occupational and lifestyle health and wellbeing determinants
- increase knowledge on effective use on natural resources
- increased professional skills of employees
- increase managerial skills of employees
- increase ability of employees to cope with demands of working life
- increased knowledge of employees on legal requirements and their rationale concerning health and safety at work and environment management in enterprises
- increase employability
- increase potential for social justice
- increase awareness of characteristics and social value of good enterprise management
- increased transparency in HESM evaluation and decision making process broader role of enterprise in social capital development
- increased efficiency in using scientific research results in building up social capital
- increase society awareness of determinants of sustainable production and consumption
- increased efficiency of building up social capital through better understanding, confidence and mutual support of political, social and economic society leaders

Environmental benefits of workplace health management

- increased efficiency in using natural resources
- increased number of enterprises with improved pollution prevention mechanisms and reduced wastes
- increased number of enterprises managing environmental issue in compliance with legal requirements
- increased number of enterprises managing environmental issue using principles and methods of such strategies as Cleaner Production, Eco-efficiency, Green Productivity, and Pollution Prevention

There are emerging challenges that require policy changes for health at the workplace

- Ageing of the working population – resulting in different occupational health needs;
- Changing structure of employment – increase in temporary employment;
- Diversity and dispersal of the traditional work structures (e.g. outsourcing);
- Increased number of interpersonal contacts at work – psychosocial problems;
- Intensification and repetitive work;
- Unpredictable working hours;
- Violence and harassment at the workplace.

Workplace health management is most effective when there is:

- commitment from senior management
- active participation of employees and trade unions
- integration of company policies and clear targets for health, environment and safety management
- effective management processes and procedures
- adequate resourcing
- a high level of management competence, and
- rigorous monitoring of company performance using the principles of continuous quality improvement

References

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