

Employability in the 21st Century

2nd International Conference on Sustainable Employability - Building Bridges between Science and Practice



12-13 September 2018

Provinciehuis Flemish Brabant, Leuven, Belgium

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Conference Book

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Building Bridges between Science and Practice

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In memoriam

Prof. Dr. Judith Sluiter

1962 – 2018



Prof. Judith Sluiter passed away the 14th of May of this year. She was one of the keynote speakers for this conference, was a member of the International Advisory Board, and also contributed to the first edition of the conference as member of the International Scientific Committee.

Judith Sluiter was professor in occupational medicine at the Academic Medical Center, University of Amsterdam in The Netherlands and director of the department Coronel Institute of Occupational Health. She was also director of the Amsterdam Public Health research institute.

She started her scientific career on neuroendocrine reactivity and recovery during and after working time. Her recent research contributed to the knowledge on the medical examination of work-ability and prognosis of job-specific recovery after health problems.

She was very active in the International Commission on Occupational Health for many years. From 2012 to 2017 she served as ICOH National Secretary for The Netherlands and was an active member of the Scientific Committees on Work Organization and Psychosocial Factors, Aging and Work and Musculoskeletal Disorders.

We will remember her as a highly valued colleague and with warm feelings.

Introduction

The successful first edition of September 2016 and the numerous positive reactions of the participants, showed the need for more dialogue between science and practice and encouraged us to organize a second edition.

The 2nd *International Conference on Sustainable Employability: “Employability in the 21st Century”* was held on September 12th – 13th in Leuven, Belgium and was organized in a joint initiative by partners from the field (Securex), academic partners (Ghent University and University of Liège), and the Scientific Committee “Aging and Work” of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH).

Bearing the same subtitle “Building Bridges between Science and Practice”, this second edition continued to strive for an enhanced understanding between scientists and practitioners. Even more than in the first edition, we wanted to stimulate an intense interaction and communication between enterprises and scientists. In order to enhance mutual communication, both practitioners and scientists presented their work (practical cases or scientific studies), making this conference a non-classical scientific conference and a non-classical business conference. Where possible we used a unique format in which sessions comprise one practical case and two scientific contributions tackling analogous subjects. These sessions acted as platforms for exchanging practical know-how and scientific knowledge, stimulating constructive discussions and interactions between scientists and practitioners.

156 participants, coming from 15 different countries, took part in this event. We could welcome participants and presenters with various educational and professional background, both from universities and companies.

They were offered a program of 100 presentations, covering a wide range of topics related to sustainable employability: 9 plenary keynotes; 56 scientific contributions and 15 practical cases, spread over 24 sessions; and 20 poster presentations.

This Conference Book comprises the abstracts and summaries of the majority of the presentations.

We can look back on inspiring keynotes, animated sessions and fruitful networking, and we sincerely hope that this conference contributed to a fruitful dialogue between all stakeholders involved.

Dr. Philippe Kiss
Occupational Health Physician, Securex

On behalf of the Local Organizing Committee

Local Organizing Committee

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- Prof. Dr. Isabelle Hansez, University of Liège, Belgium

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Keynote presentations

Sustainable Career Management: What is it and How does it Work?

Jos Akkermans, *Prof.*, VU Amsterdam, Netherlands

Research on sustainable careers has seen a recent rise in momentum. This fits with development on society and on the labour markets related to increasing complexity and dynamics of contemporary careers. But what exactly is a sustainable career, and what are its key characteristics? How does this translate to (HR) practice? These are a few of the questions that I discuss with you during the session, thereby sharing the way scholars currently think about sustainable careers and attempting to bridge this perspective to practice.

How we delivered the promise of Ambition 2018 to our employees

Bart De Smet, CEO, Ageas, Belgium

For Ageas, a sustainable relationship with all stakeholders is also the key to sustainable growth. The group's Ambition 2018 statement reflects how the company looks at its relationship with all key stakeholders, starting with its own employees. In its Ambition 2018 statement, Ageas commits to guarantee the well-being of its employees, to stimulate talent development and creativity and to build an inspiring and motivating working environment for all.

But how do you constantly inspire and motivate employees in a company so badly impacted by the financial crisis just 10 years ago and challenged in effect to start again? How do you stimulate talent development and creativity in a sector that is perceived as unattractive to work within, and with perceptions about the industry getting worse every year? Ageas's answer was to create a transparent and ambitious story towards its employees first and foremost. A story representing a clear mission and vision, a distinct identity and sense of belonging and a well-defined action plan. But most of all: a story that put employees at the centre of the plate creating a sense of ownership and accountability.

Among other things, we invest in providing employees with different training opportunities reflecting the group's strong commitment to continuous learning. It is about having the opportunity to evolve alongside the environment. The work environment is changing faster than ever, but within Ageas, we embrace this as very much an opportunity, not as a threat. By offering relevant training opportunities, employees grow in parallel with the digital evolution and other emerging trends. This allows the company to stay agile and in a position to respond to the changing needs of all stakeholders, whilst offering constant learning opportunities for our employees.

This year we took the involvement of our employees at Ageas to the next level. In September, Ageas will announce its new strategic plan for the next 3 years. We took a very different approach to developing this plan compared to previous strategic plans by leveraging our own people rather than relying on external consultants. We were confident that we had all the necessary quality, knowledge and competences in-house to make this new strategic exercise a success. We haven't been disappointed. More than 70 employees across the Group representing different functions and experiences took up the challenge and made it work... as you will discover in September. In parallel with this strategic exercise we launched a sportive challenge designed to encourage a healthier lifestyle for our employees, and for the benefit of a good cause. The impact was extremely positive as this also reflected a strong commitment to health within our core business strategy. This initiative has created a lot of enthusiasm and a sense of belonging, with the positive benefit that employees are physically and mentally fitter.

At Ageas, we show trust in our employees and belief in their talent, and encourage them to be creative and think out of the box. We give employees the space to test new ideas, to challenge and to surprise us. In return we expect them to contribute to the success of the company, but also to share their successes and failures with colleagues all over the world. It is by sharing these experiences that we can learn, apply best practices across the group and grow together. We are a team, not a sum of individuals and each contribution is rewarded and recognised.

The results of our approach and commitment towards employees have been satisfying thus far. The results of our latest employee motivation survey indicates that employees are proud to work for Ageas and they are enjoying it. Thanks to their passion, entrepreneurship and commitment Ageas has evolved from a company in crisis towards the sustainable, profitable growth company it is today. Ageas has made an impressive recovery over the last 10 years, and this cannot be achieved by a CEO only, he needs to be surrounded by a winning team, and I am very proud to say that I am.

The Strategic Importance of Sustainable Employability. The case of Belgium

David Ducheyne, *President of hrpro.be and Owner of Otolith, Belgium*

Belgium scores high on most of the criteria of decent work, quality of work. There are few precarious jobs. There is a well-developed social security.

One could suspect that it's a prosperous country with high employment levels. But there are other signs. Participation of older workers is low, long term absenteeism is on the rise, and in spite of a relatively high unemployment rate, it's increasingly difficult to find skilled people. The concept of sustainable employability is of strategic importance because it unites the interests of workers, employers and society. But is it high enough on the agenda? Or are we still working on old solutions to solve new challenges? And what are the levers to develop it?

Boosting Work Engagement by Job Crafting, Job Resources and Servant Leadership – Research and Practice

Jari Hakanen, *Prof.*, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki, Finland

After nearly two decades of research on work engagement, I would consider it as best possible state of employee well-being. In my talk I will briefly discuss different types of employee wellbeing, e.g. job boredom, burnout and workaholism and how they relate to work engagement. I will give a research-based overview of the individual and organizational outcomes of work engagement and its important antecedents: job resources, job crafting and servant leadership. Finally, I will describe Finnish top-down and bottom-up resource-focused workplace interventions.

Two major changes in work and organizational psychology and occupational health psychology have been taking place during this millennium. First, the rise of positive psychology meant that employee-well-being was not anymore only considered from its opposite (stress, burnout) or being satisfied at work but attention was given to true well-being at work (work engagement, flourishing). Second, traditionally organizational top-down approaches have dominated how to develop and improve psychosocial working conditions and how to impact employee well-being. However, until this decade quite little has been known about the extent to which employees themselves can also create a better fit for themselves with their working conditions, that is, job demands and resources. Job crafting represents such a bottom-up approach, which may complement traditional top-down work arrangements.

In this keynote, by using research evidence from different sectors and professions, I will provide an overview of the concept of work engagement, its prevalence, outcomes and important drivers: servant leadership, job resources, and job crafting. Work engagement has been defined as a positive and fulfilling, relatively stable state of well-being at work consisting of feeling vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed at work. Often work engagement has been investigated using the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, in which various job resources are expected and found to enhance work engagement whereas different job demands are known antecedents of burnout. Moreover, according to the model, work engagement is expected to lead to such positive organizational outcomes, such as organizational commitment, job performance, and innovativeness. Although job demands and burnout are assumed to lead to (negative) health outcomes, there is evidence supporting the positive relation between work engagement and physical and mental health. I will present first findings of an on-going study, in which we compared eight task, interpersonal, and organizational job resources in 11 different jobs to identify the best drivers of work engagement in different jobs.

In addition to job resources, there is a growing number of research focusing on what leaders can do to boost work engagement in their followers and what employees themselves can proactively do to increase their engagement and stay engaged. In my talk, I will discuss the role of servant leadership and job crafting in employee engagement. Servant leadership is a leadership theory and set of practices and a mindset that particularly aims to serve followers for their own good and encourage their growth and development so that over time they may reach their fullest potential and by doing so promote the good of the organization as well. Job crafting, in turn, can be defined as self-initiated future oriented behaviors and cognitions that employees can use as proactive strategies to find better fit with their jobs and thereby feel more engaged at work and perform better.

“What happens vs. what is” – the notion of “change” in the older workforce

Hans Martin Hasselhorn, *Prof.*, Bergische Universität Wuppertal, Germany

Much of what we know about work and its relation to health and employment originates from views of static exposures and outcomes: bad working conditions in the past lead to poor health today and in the future. But in working life, we find both static and changing conditions.

In this presentation we will look at changes in work, health and attitudes of the older work force when approaching retirement age.

New data from the lidA-Cohort study (www.lida-studie.de) indicates the presence of retirement in the minds of workers who still are in their 50ies. What is obvious is the gap between many workers' wish concerning retirement timing (early exit from work) and the expectations (late exit). And life in retirement is associated with hopes and with concerns.

A close look at the older work force in lidA indicates that – with extended working lives in mind – adaptation is fully ongoing among workers in their 50ies. Data reveals adaptation processes (changes) that react to changes and imply changes.

Changes at work may constitute threats, but also opportunities. Considering “change” as the rule and not the exception is both a challenge and an opportunity for research as well as for organisational intervention when it comes to the older workers' work, health, work ability and, finally, employment.

The presentation is inspired by the thoughts of the Dutch psychologist Robert A. Roe.

Physical activity at work, musculoskeletal disorders and sustained employment: Time for paradigm change for improved prevention?

Andreas Holtermann, *Prof.*, National Research Centre for the Working Environment, Copenhagen, Denmark

The demographic changes in Europe require larger fractions of the population to work for longer. In Denmark, the statutory retirement age will increase in accordance with the increasing life expectancy. Children born today can therefore expect to be working to 75 years of age. The question is how to promote health and the ability to work of the population up to that age.

Today, a considerable fraction of the population is not in health or able to work until the current statutory age of retirement (65 years in Denmark). The group having particular challenges working until statutory age of retirement is workers with short education with high manual work demands (blue collar workers). In my speak, I will I) describe why this group has particular challenges working until statutory retirement age, II) give arguments for why more ambitious interventions for promoting long healthy working life for blue collars are urgently needed, and III) provide suggestions on such ambitious interventions at workplaces.

I) Workers with short education and high manual work demands are at particular risk for early drop-out from the labor market because of their combined exposure to several risk factors. Particularly, these are the harmful effects from a) *high physical work demands*, which 1) increase the risk for health impairments, like musculoskeletal pain, 2) is a barrier to perform work tasks if having impaired health and function (e.g. more difficult for a construction worker with heavy lifting to perform his work with low back pain than for an office worker with the same low back pain), and 3) causing fatigue, being a barrier for a healthy active life, b) *lifestyle*, where it is well documented that poor lifestyle is a strong risk factor for early drop-out from the labor market, and c) *the combination of high physical work demands and poor lifestyle* causing an imbalance between the physical demands of the work and the physical work capacity of the worker.

II) The dominating workplace interventions today aim to preventive workers to become “injured or health impaired” from work. For the blue collar workers, the main preventive initiative has therefore been to “minimize” the physical work demands with more and better technical equipment, lifting aids, automatizations and ergonomic legislations. However, is this “the less – the better” approach appropriate for promoting a long healthy working life? In Denmark, despite extensive implementation of ergonomics aids and principles for proper working technique and increased automatization, the prevalence of workers reporting musculoskeletal pain and fatigue from work has not reduced, but rather increased since 2010. Thus, a more ambiguous workplace prevention paradigm for long healthy working life is needed.

III) The ‘Goldilocks Principle’ has been suggested as a new approach of how productive work should be designed to literally promote health and physical capacity of the workers (Holtermann, Mathiassen, Straker 2018). The Goldilocks Principle is inspired by the fairy-tale of the girl (Goldilocks) coming across a house in the woods belonging to a family of three bears. She tries the porridge, the chairs and the beds; finding that some were too hot/large/hard, some too cold/small/soft, but some were exactly ‘just right’ for her needs. Like the fairy-tale, the Goldilocks Principle aims to design productive work to be ‘just right’ with respect to physical activity, with the ultimate aim of workers improving health and physical capacity by performing their work. If shown to be effective, we consider the Goldilocks Principle to have a great potential in promoting a long healthy working life.

Holtermann A, Mathiassen SE, Straker L. Promoting health and physical capacity during productive work: the Goldilocks Principle. *Scandinavian Journal of Work & Environmental Health*, 2018. http://www.sjweh.fi/show_abstract.php?abstract_id=3754

Opening keynote

Yves Verschueren, *General Director*, *essenscia*, Belgium
President, European Chemical Employers Group (CEEG)

Demographic change and lengthening of careers are one of the main issues for the highly-specialised chemical industry in Belgium. In order to support companies with this challenge, social partners of the Belgian chemical, plastics and life sciences sector established a Demography Fund during previous negotiations. Starting from early 2017, the Demography Fund provides substantive and financial support at the social dialogue on company level with the aim of developing tailor-made action plans. One year later, a substantial number of companies implemented several action plans. A first evaluation is done, next steps are being prepared. Social partners are committed to build further on this innovative path ensuring motivated workforce till the end of every career.

Healthy work or healthy retirement? Research on the relationship between psychosocial working conditions, prolonged working life, retirement and health

Hugo Westerlund, *Prof.*, Stress Research Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

As governments are trying to push up retirement age it becomes increasingly important to understand the factors that influence health and workability in older people. While most people are healthy enough to work beyond the standard retirement age of today, some studies indicate that retirement may bring relief in those with suboptimal health, but also that working longer could be healthy for others. The keynote will review the research literature and present some recent data on the long-term effects of working conditions amongst older workers, leading on to a discussion about the potential consequences for health and inequalities of a prolonged working life.

Practical cases

Siemens

Employability - Enjoyability

Ivo Christiaens¹, [Veerle Doornaert](#)¹

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We believe in employees that can grow, develop and assure a career long added value for our company. Our goal is to proactively predict employability-issues in the future & take actions now to avoid the occurrence based on individual competencies & sustainability of the business-activity. To do this, we use the employability index, which I will discuss in detail. Based on this, we also constructed an employability / enjoyability toolbox. That consist of several future-directed tools that we use to enhance the employability of our employees. It consists for example of assessments, individual career coachings, E-learning, a digitalization learning world, a career manual, a day in the shoes of, interesting books, development webinars and workshops, and much more.

****Medialaan****

How to be happier by working smarter ?

Ann De Bisschop¹

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Introduction

Delivering quality and service is only possible with employees who feel good. But how do you reconcile that with a stressful environment, a serious workload and many deadlines? Keeping that balance is the core task of Ann De Bisschop, Director Wellbeing at MEDIALAAN. The organization invests in healthy, happy, well informed and committed employees.

What are the causes and symptoms of stress? How can I make myself resilient? How can I increase my productivity? What is the importance of a good leader? Is multitasking really that bad? And what can healthy nutrition and sufficient exercise mean for your concentration and energy level? These and many other themes belong to her job responsibilities.

Methods

Determination of the needs with a start/stop/continue questioning

Introduction of flexible workhours & homeworking

Encourage to move more by offering a fitbit

Launch of a Wellbeing Platform with :

- different physical challenges (walking, running, biking, ...)
- a calender with all the upcoming events (yoga, ropeskipping, zumba, ...)
- information about healthy lifestyle
- ergonomics tips

Results

It's too early to have quantitative results, but our employees show their appreciation and the active participation to our events and challenges is the best proof that it works.

I see walking & standing meetings, I see people sitting on an ergonomic ball and doing some yoga exercises at their desk. They take an active break outside in the air and they don't eat at their desk anymore. They take the stairs instead of the elevator. They work at home or in one of the silent rooms if they want to focus. They take one of our bikes to go home instead of the car....

Conclusions and/or implications

Healthy & Happy people go for that extra mile.

By offering a wide range of lectures, challenges, events and opportunities, Wellbeing@Medialaan has become part of our culture. It's not only a way to keep our employees satisfied and motivated. In the war for talent it's also an asset to attract new people.

*****Unbox*****

Personalised reward by Unbox as a strategic lever

Johan Defevere¹

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People crucial in change

Every organization is nowadays in change. People are the crucial factor to drive this change. A crucial driver for your people is their reward. So, is your reward strategy aligned to your strategic goals in times of continuous change?

Personalised reward is not only about free choices

By creating, within one 24/7 platform, a personalized reward system, based on promoting choices that support your strategic goals, makes you take the next step in aligning reward with your strategy. By demonetizing part of your reward, and creating a personal “units-budget” that gives people the opportunity to compose their reward package in view of their current needs and future ambitions, you can give an answer to multiple challenges; your employees can make choices in their reward, you challenge them to think about their (future) career , their development, their participation in realizing the company strategy; you create a future proof reward approach that gives you the opportunity to control salary cost evolution; you realize all of these goals by using a unique, integrated personalized reward concept and platform.

The solution

We present you concrete insights in the strategy, the revolutionizing concept and the platform.

The proof

The successful case of a client will be presented.

Rikolto

From hierarchical NGO to international network organization with self-steering teams

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

Since 2015, Rikolto (formerly known as Vredeseilanden/VECO) started the process to transform itself into an international network organization with a flat structure and self-steering teams. The restructuring (with an accompanying change of brand name) was a logical next step in the evolution of a traditional development NGO supporting smallholder farmers to boost their agricultural production, towards a global innovator in food systems.

Results

The governance structure got a complete overhaul. Since January 1st 2017, Rikolto is an international organization with an international Board of Directors. The Belgian based “head office” ceased to exist. All teams operate now at the same level and the organization’s operational decision making is done by the 8 directors of the regional teams. At the heart of the organization lies the international office, which safeguards operational excellence by providing monitoring & evaluation tools, audits and support for fundraising.

Step by step, the teams across the globe are evolving towards self-steering project teams with flexible role division, utilizing permanent feedback systems allowing continuous improvement and personal growth.

Conclusions and/or implications

The new structure boosted international collaboration on common themes and challenges between teams that were previously focused on their own region. The freshly created freedoms and responsibilities for teams across the globe, led to new initiatives and an increased feeling of ownership among the staff.

However, we experience different speeds in the evolution towards self-steering teams because of differences in leadership styles, personalities and cultural backgrounds.

ING

Sustainable Employability@ING : From Job to Job Approach

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

Switching roles and employers is the new normal. And the ideal of long-term careers and the benefits associated with it such as prestige, job security and an early pension are long gone.

ING's answer is to invest even more in you. And now the deal we offer looks like this: "To be agile and adaptable, we need you to be agile and adaptable. Embark with us on a lifetime of learning and always be a step ahead for your next career move, be it inside or outside ING. We will invest in your personal leadership and craftsmanship. We both win: You become more valuable to ING, while becoming ever more employable. In our social plan, we applied these principles for all employees.

Methods

To give all employees equal chances to find a new role within ING after the transformation we organized **redeployment** in a very structured way. Employees losing their job after redeployment are supported by a program called **Job Accelerator**, to find a new job within or outside ING during their last 3 months within the company.

The Job Accelerator program offers employees 12 days to invest in their own career and an exhaustive and innovative program of supporting measurements to find a new professional activity : individual career coaching, workshops, a training budget to attend external trainings, access to internal vacancies, access to external vacancies, Job Café, Job Fairs, All employees could choose for voluntary leave to start their own business. Employees with at least 10 year of experience @ING and aged 55 or more could choose for an **early leave plan**. This plan removes the most important barriers for a career switch in the last part of the career: a financial security until the legal pension and access to job opportunities.

Results

Over 5000 employees went through redeployment and 90% was matched to a new role within the new organization. 55 employees started their own business. 897 employees have chosen for voluntary leave. 288 employees were supported by the Job Accelerator to find a new job during their last 3 months within the organisation. 35 of them found a new job within ING. 143 had very concrete new employment perspectives (new job, own business) at the moment they left ING, 15 opted for the early leave plan and only 33% left ING without having a clear employment opportunity.

Of the employees leaving with the early leave plan, 70% wants to stay active. More than 100 of them registered already formally another professional activity.

Conclusions and/or implications

The social plan within ING shows to be successful in empowering people for the future and them from job to job via several measures and programs.

Emmaüs

To care is our core & our coeur' – sustainable work & wellbeing @ Emmaüs

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Introduction

How to work longer in good mental and physical shape and with 'goesting'? This is the strong challenge organizations in healthcare have to face with.

Methods

Instead of blaming the hectic society, the busy work environment with demanding bosses and annoying colleagues, the employees struggling with their work-life balance, Emmaüs chooses an approach that is built on respect and dialogue. Balancing the needs of employees, teams, organization and clients is our main focus. Policies and actions fit with the culture of Emmaüs as a value-driven organization.

Results

A vision text on sustainable work @ Emmaüs is approved by all partners of the social dialogue and provides a shared framework for concrete actions.

In order to prevent burn-out and increase resilience, initiatives are taken on 3 levels: selfcare, team care, organization level.

Last but not least, talent development has taken a major place in HR-strategy and actions.

Conclusions

Sustainable work has definitely taken its place on the agenda. Work in progress, it is and will be but it's clear for each party involved that we all are co-responsible for the workability of our co-workers throughout their life course.

Experience@work

Co-sourcing as a leverage for sustainable careers?

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

We all have to work longer, and pre-pensions are being discouraged by governments. Stakeholders are confronted with challenges:

- employers : keep employees (longer) at work, although they do not always have this possibility in their own organization anymore.
- experienced employees: want to share their experience and still go for new challenges, but do not want to run risks in terms of salary, advantages and security (the golden cage effect).
- non-profit or other hiring organizations : cannot find experienced employees anymore (war for talent) and/or do not have the budget for experienced employees.

Methods

Experience@Work offers a solution to these challenges by allowing senior employees to look for end of career opportunities across the borders of their own organization, without losing the link with their current employer. Senior talents are “lent out” until pension age on the basis of a service contract. The receiving company only has to foresee the budget of a junior profile.

Experience@Work serves as a matching platform between the offer of and demand for experienced profiles.

Results

After three years, 15 employers from various sectors have become a member of the platform. More than 70 senior employees share their experience in a non profit organization or closer to home. They are real ambassadors, and are grateful to their current employer that they are allowed to go for such alternative end of career path.

Conclusions and/or implications

This out of the box initiative represents is a not for profit initiative which is open for other employers and which offers a real solution for longer and sustainable careers (cfr. Whitepaper Antwerp Management School).

Deloitte

Wellbeing

Christel Knuts¹

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Strategic priority and Ambition

Deloitte fundamentally believes that wellbeing drives engagement, creativity and productivity, which results in a happier, flourishing professional and personal life of our people, as well as in higher client satisfaction, higher retention and better business results.

Our ambition is to empower our people to thrive in their professional and personal life, with a healthy body, an engaged mind and a sense of purpose.

Approach

Several steps were taken :

- Building a business case, with facts and figures from in- and outside the organisation, as well as on feedback from our people (scientific studies and models, absenteeism figures, presenteeism, turnover rates, exit reporting, ...)
- Developing a framework and vision on wellbeing : body – physical health, mind – mental health, and purpose, surrounded by a supportive and caring environment.
- Survey to gather input
- Leadership session to establish the level of priority, to create awareness and insights on the topic, to establish the importance of open dialogue and have alignment, commitment and accountability on further steps.

Followed by concrete actions :

- Cascade the importance of and skill-building on open conversations throughout the organization
- Offer our people a range of options to improve their wellbeing, from improving their physical health (sports, relaxation, healthy food, ...), over helping people to know and build on their strengths, have open conversations, manage stress, find help in difficult situations.

Intermediate results

Feedback learns there is an increased awareness on the impact of wellbeing, and the role genuine dialogue plays in it. Signs are that real dialogue is becoming more prevalent in the organization. This is not (yet) (significantly) reflected in the outcome of the Engagement survey, exit and other reporting; this requires a mentality switch. Several actions will be continued, further steps still to be determined.

More information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfFqvAKN-Os&feature=youtu.be>.

IBA

What recipe for successful HR Chemistry?

Thierry Lamury¹

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Aim

IBA context

- No consolidation of (HR) risks
- Business Units feedback : HR Business Partners don't always have the full view & impact
- Too late decision-making:
 - o Few cultural sessions not done in some departments
 - o Some Team/people management issues
- Create HR capability & methodology to identify & mitigate risks
 - o cultural
 - o people management
 - o organizational efficiency
 - o HR compliance (internal /external)
- Pulse & Boost perceived as positive
 - o long-term added value for all (win-win process)

Methods

- (HR) Data analysis
- Specific surveys & interviews
- Team problem-solving & facilitation methods

Results

- Currently (June 12, 2018)
 - o Project Scope, Team & SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) defined
 - o Process Flow available
 - o Pulse start triggers & criteria available
 - o Pilot selected
 - o (HR) Data matrix drafted for Pilot
 - o Pilot Methods fine-tuned

Conclusions

- Pilot REX (Returns of Experience) & Conclusions (available @Employability Conference in September)
- Recommendations for deployment

*****Branding by Being*****

The ultimate leverage for business success – Branding by Being

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Introduction and/or Aim

We provide the audience with strategies to achieve both a thriving business and inspired workforce. It will address the following areas:

- Inclusive Leadership
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Experience and Branding
- Talent Attraction and Retention

Methods

We will explore the above areas by reviewing priorities that businesses need to focus on in order to thrive in the continuously changing market. Specifically:

- How to create a business case for the CEO and executive team, demonstrating the benefits of an effective people strategy
- Why motivation is a short-term solution, and how to create inspiration for long term cultural change
- What do employees actually want and need from their employer
- How to increase engagement and job satisfaction
- How to create innovation through harnessing collaboration and diversity of thought
- How to create internal ambassadorship via the implementation of employee experience in alignment to organizational values.

Results

Without people, there is no organization. Therefore, the workforce is the heart and foundation of a company. Every business outcome can be linked back to either the effective or ineffective leadership of the team(s).

Delegates will learn how to leverage the power of culture, intrinsic inspiration and inclusivity to achieve increased levels of efficiency, engagement and innovation.

Conclusions and/or implications

Culture and people will be the most valuable asset and competitive advantage in the next decade.

Delegates will be clear about why investing in their cultural alignment and workforce now, will lead to higher wellbeing, productivity and better talent acquisition in the future.

You will no longer invent or design your brand, but become your brand before you start communicating about it. The result is the creation of authentic experiences for both employees and customers.

Armonea

Armonea - A new approach of creating a central introduced well-being programme in a decentralized organization with 6400 employees

Nicky Palm¹, Caroline Tan², Elisabeth Van Steendam², Dirk Van de Walle²

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² Securex Health & Safety, Belgium

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Introduction

Armonea is a private elderly residential care group with 89 rest homes, residencies and assisted apartments (Belgium, Spain & Germany). Securex assists Armonea with their well-being policy. Nicky Palm, the new HR-director since summer 2017, faced many issues concerning HR and well-being in Armonea. At the end of 2016 there was conducted a mandatory psychosocial riskanalysis. The responsrate (28%) of the care and nurse personnel was too low for a representative analysis. Besides these functions had the worst results for the 5 domains in the riskanalysis: workorganisation, workconditions, terms of employment, job content and interpersonal relations. Therefore a bigger focus on care and nurse was necessary.

Methods

First a short survey (KPI's need for recovery and organizational social capital) was conducted during summer 2017, with a significant higher responsrate. Besides KPI's on absenteeism and on medical control by sickleaf were available. So with Nicky as the new HR-director there were a lot of KPI's accessible. Together we were convinced of a burning platform based on these data-KPI's. For start all these KPI's were linked with others (NPS-score, work accidents, psychosocial cases) and selected 2 flemish- and 2 french-speaking rest homes, a good and a worse scoring per language. Next on were in-dept-interviews with care and nurse on the 5 domains in these 4 locations.

Results

As a result of a finally qualitative workshop-analysis the well-being programme was implemented.

Conclusion

The combination of a quantitative and qualitative approach brings opportunities towards a central approach for a decentralized organization. The follow-up will be conducted by HR-analytical dashboards.

*****Practical Case – Securex*****

Age & Employability: a perfect marriage

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

We would be happy to present a testimonial of our experience during the recruitment process and our feedback after 2.5 years of cooperation. It would be a joined presentation from:

- An “older” employee available on the market after being subject of a reorganization
- A recruiter looking for new employees in a niche market and what we call in Belgium a “bottleneck profession”.

Methods

In the first part, the main purpose would be to explain how this process took place and the hurdles we both experienced.

The emphasis would be on the need of flexibility from both the solicitant and the recruiter (backed up from her/his organization” to create an opportunity for both partners and to have “a chance for success”.

Conclusions and/or implications

We would like to focus on the following items:

- Flexibility in terms salary
- Flexibility in terms of “working schedules”
 - o Part time
 - o Supplementary holidays (unpaid)
 - o Car scheme
 - o Etc.
- Uncertain feelings during the process.
- Etc.

In the second part of the presentation, we would focus on the experience / lessons learned after 2.5 years of work.

- Difference between “promises” and “reality”.
- What would we (both the recruiter and the employee do different)

*****Jessa Hospital*****

Burn-out reduction based on an evidence based online coachingstool

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Aim

Despite the availability of interventions in reducing stress and burn-out, the incidence of burn-out risk of 10% among hospital staff and physicians was high risk, especially in a context where patient safety is a top priority.

So the hospital management prioritized the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions to reduce burn-out risk.

Methods

To reduce the gap between the available programs on stress management and burn-out prevention with the number of individuals suffering from a burn-out, we developed an online tailor-made coaching tool based on evidence based methods and theoretical framework on stress reduction: the Job Demands Resources model.

In a research context we set up an intervention group and a control group. Every three months both groups were offered the questionnaire of work experience. After completion the questionnaire the intervention group immediately received a tailor-made feedback. The control group received no feedback.

Results

After 12 months in the intervention group there was a significant reduction in emotional exhaustion, the main characteristic of burn-out. The reduction of overall burn-out risk was increased with 7%.

Conclusions

Based on the innovated and evidence based approach of stress reduction and burn-out prevention, founded by ESF (the European Social Founding) the online coachingstool is disseminated in the Flemish part of Belgian.

Implementing the tool in the work context is not one shot only. The online coachingstool is a strong tool to strengthen the individual employee in his skills to cope with stress. Stress management and burn-out approach is a shared responsibility of employer and employee. So in a work context managers have also to invest in strengthen their leaders in there competence of pro-active stress management for their teams.

Securex

The Securex case. Leaders and their crucial role in obtaining successful sustainable employees

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Introduction

The way in which we work in the future will differ in many ways with the way we work today, due to a cocktail of demographic, sociologic, technologic and economic trends. A few challenges that we see already today are the dejuvanation and greying workforce. These evolutions are inevitable and have important consequences for organisations such as an increase in long term absenteeism, scarcity of talent, mismatch talent vs jobs, burn-out and/or bore-out, etc.

According to Securex, an important part of the solution for these negative consequences can be found in the creation of sustainable employable employees.

In this **casus we will show you some concrete examples how Securex handles this sustainable employability**.

For Securex, it is crucial that employees come to their work for the right reasons. We do not want our employees to work only for the money, but instead, we want them to work because they just love their job, or because they find it meaningful. As such, they will perform at their best, and our clients get the best service.

To reach this kind of 'autonomous' motivation, we introduced several 'revolutionary' procedures. For example: we made the use of a time-clock no longer voluntary, which means that no one within Securex was forced to use the time-clock any longer. Further, the management- & executive colleagues can plan their own holidays. Interference of their responsible is no longer necessary. And of course, we are pioneer in homeworking. Some of the employees can choose where they work. Depending off course on their own preferences, their job, and the team.

But the story continues: Securex offers additional answers to other strategic challenges. For example: Leadership, Workaholism, Motivation, Absenteeism, Ageability, ... Regarding the latter, these solutions will be presented during different oral sessions.

Methods

This vision on Sustainable Employability, Leadership, Autonomous Motivation, ... is strengthened thanks to a unique partnership:

- own research material, from the Securex HR Research department
- business insights and practical experiences, from the Securex expertise centers HR Consulting, Health & Safety and the HR department
- academic research material from various chairs and specific collaboration with UGent (Prof. Frederik Anseel), KU Leuven (Prof. Anja Van Den Broeck), ...

Results and discussion

The results of all these initiatives will be delivered by mid of August and will be presented in detail during the presentation.

Hifluence

Hifluence, an extreme experiment in the company of the future. How peace of mind and self-management is the recipe for sustainable employment

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

We see Hifluence as a breathing organism leading to create a world where organization, people, technology, society and nature are connected in a sustainable way creating value for something bigger than themselves.

Methods

Agile Structure: 100% self-managing, purpose-driven organization of autonomous teams and people.

Unique advice & decision process: Everyone CEO in their roles. Decisions are taken by those that do the work. Tactical process organized weekly accelerates operational decision-making. Governance process solves organizational challenges on a monthly basis.

Feedback: We stimulate direct *feedback as a gift* in a nonviolent communication format. Facilitators identify ego and use it as a source for self-reflection.

Wholeness: 1-year Peace Of Mind tracks focus on self-reflection, mental & physical health. These are bi-monthly sessions in small groups with professional coaches who are also available 24/7 for personal and professional development.

Getting things done: Mandatory training because this is an essential skill in today's world.

Transparency: Finance is 100% transparent. Teams can customize salaries, benefits, make investments, etc within Hifluence guidelines.

Technology: Broad use of digital technology supports communication, collaboration and personal development.

Results

1. Net promoter score: 9/10 - 150k extra satisfaction revenue
2. Start 2015: grown to 20 people. 8 joined in 2017. One person left with all the love of his former colleagues.
3. Average Happiness surveys results Q4 2017:

Psychological Safety:	8,53 / 10
Happiness:	7,88 / 10
Satisfaction with personal growth:	7,81 / 10
Does Hifluence stimulate me? :	8,13 / 10
Am I "On Purpose"?	8,15 / 10
Am I passionate about what I do?	7,59 / 10

Conclusions and/or implications

Working at Hifluence fundamentally changes your life. You become a better version of yourself. The value of that for Hifluence goes far beyond the traditional KPI's most companies target.

Oral presentations

Preventing work-related upper limb musculoskeletal disorders by using the Saltsa method: a pilot study in a Belgian company

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Introduction

Upper limb musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are major causes of work disability in the European Union (prevalence rates between 17-30% among industry workers). Treatment and lost productivity cost billions of euros each year (0.5–2% of the Gross National Product). To detect and evaluate work-related MSDs, an international protocol/criteria document was developed (Saltsa). In a microelectronics company with high ergonomic strain, Mensura Occupational Health Services implemented the Saltsa method.

Methods

Workers who reported symptoms of pain or paresthesia in the neck, shoulder/arm, elbow, hand/wrist, or fingers in the preceding 12 months underwent a standardized physical examination by the occupational health physician (OHP) based on the Saltsa criteria. Additionally, employee characteristics were collected (age, work seniority, stress, BMI, and physical activity).

Results

From February to December 2017, 308 workers underwent the Saltsa screening. Results showed a high level of MSDs: 14% of men and 41.9% of women presented one or more MSDs.

Among workers having one of the three classical MSDs (rotator cuff syndrome, epicondylitis, and carpal tunnel syndrome), high rates of cervicalgia and cubital tunnel syndrome were additionally found.

The analysis of the results highlighted that some workstations were problematic and revealed a prevalence of carpal tunnel syndrome, extensor tenosynovitis, and cubital tunnel syndrome up to 5 times higher compared to other workstations. Furthermore, positive associations were found between MSDs and the level of stress and work seniority (8, 16, and 32% after one, two, and three years respectively).

Discussion

The Saltsa method has shown to be a reliable and reproducible tool to detect and evaluate work-related upper limb MSDs by the OHP in a standardized way. By assessing collective data, the Saltsa method enables organizations to map priorities and target ergonomic actions, which could inform companies' MSD prevention policies.

Do we capture organizational climate in workplace surveys?

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

In Sweden, new provisions from the Work Environment Authority underline the importance of organizational conditions for a healthy work environment. This makes it highly relevant being able to assess organizational climate, understood as the employees' shared perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures. The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, COPSOQ, includes constructs intended to capture the organizational climate. Another relevant instrument is the Psychosocial Safety Climate, PSC. The aim of this presentation is to present and discuss how well we capture organizational climate in workplace surveys by using COPSOQ and PSC.

Methods

Qualitative interviews using a think aloud procedure when answering PSC and COPSOQ questions were conducted with 36 informants. A main purpose was to achieve insight in how people reflect when presented for questions, which are formulated to capture the organizational climate. Further, 831 social workers (80% response rate) employed at a large Swedish municipality answered an online questionnaire with the same questions. Statistical analyses include bivariate correlations between PSC and the COPSOQ scales, *Organizational Justice* and *Vertical Trust*, and calculations of the intraclass correlation coefficient, ICC1, as an indication of amount of variance attributed to different organizational levels.

Results

The interview results pointed to inconsistency regarding informants' interpretation of key concepts such as *senior management* and *workplace*. The majority of informants reflected in relation to their local work unit climate rather than to an overall organizational climate. This result was further corroborated by findings from the statistical analyses of questionnaire data.

Conclusions and/or implications

The results corroborated the validity of the three scales as group constructs. However, the results also indicated that the scales probably are capturing climate at the work unit level rather than at the overall organizational level. This should be considered when using the instruments at workplaces and for research purposes.

Bridging research and practice: Reflections on the launch of the COPSQ-Sweden webpage

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Introduction

COPSQ instrument is designed for use in research as well as practice. However, in the Swedish context COPSQ II was only seldom used at workplaces. This led to a project with the overall purpose of disseminating and facilitating the use of COPSQ as a research-based tool for the systematically work environment improvement. Central to the project was to establish an easy-to-use internet-based platform for the instrument. In 2015 we established a Swedish webpage for COPSQ with funding from AFA Insurance. The aim of this presentation is to reflect on the process of creating the webpage www.copsq.se and the current use of it.

Methods

As the webpage was meant both for practitioners and researchers, we had to consider the structure and content from their different perspectives. During the project period we had an iterative development process in close collaboration with stakeholders.

Results

The result was a webpage with the following main content: the questionnaire, how to conduct a workplace survey, interactive diagrams, library, links and a news section. This follows the logic we got from using the different perspectives. Today, the webpage is widely used by consultants, students, researchers and different kinds of organisations. Through communication via the webpage, we've got new partners for collaboration – both private companies and other types of organisations.

Conclusion

The webpage we created is now well established and is used by a broader group of people than initially expected. Today, leading OSH organizations are using COPSQ as their primary tool for workplace mapping and is used to an increasing extent among students. The overall aim to establish a webpage for disseminating and facilitate the use of COPSQ has been reached. Nevertheless, our work doesn't stop there – now we are preparing for the launch of COPSQ III.

Disentangling the sources and context of daily work stress: study protocol of a comprehensive real-time modelling study using portable devices

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Introduction and Aim

Chronic workplace stress and its health-related consequences like mental and cardiovascular diseases have been widely investigated [1-2]. This project focuses on the sources and context of psychosocial daily workplace stress in a real-world setting.

The main objective is to analyze and model real-time relationships between (1) psychosocial stress experiences within the natural work environment, (2) micro-level work activities and events, and (3) physiological signals and behaviors in office workers.

Methods

An Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) protocol has been developed, partly building on machine learning techniques. Empatica® wristbands will be used for real-life detection of stress from physiological signals; micro-level activities and events at work will be based on smartphone registrations, further processed according to an automated computer algorithm.

A field study including 100 office-based workers with high-level problem-solving tasks like managers and researchers will be implemented in Slovenia and Belgium (50 in each country). Data mining and state-of-the-art statistical methods – mainly multilevel statistical modelling for repeated data – will be used.

Expected Results and Impact

The project findings will provide novel contributions to the field of occupational health research. While traditional assessments inform us about global perceived state of chronic stress exposure, the EMA approach is expected to bring new insights about daily fluctuating work stress experiences, especially micro-level events and activities at work that induce acute physiological stress responses. The project is therefore likely to generate further evidence on relevant stressors in a real-time working environment and hence make it possible to advise on workplace procedures/policies for reducing stress.

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The third version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

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Introduction

The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) was developed for practical use – e.g. risk assessment in work places – and for research on work and health. The reasons for developing the third version of COPSOQ were: 1) International experience with the questionnaire, 2) New trends in work and 3) New theoretical concepts. The questionnaire was developed in a joint iterative process by the COPSOQ International Network with participants from Asia, the Americas and Europe in three international workshops in Ghent, Paris and Santiago de Chile 2015-17 and in several Delphi processes. Most prominent, COPSOQ III is characterized by defining core items making local adaptations of short, middle and long versions of the questionnaire easier. The present paper analyzes psychometric characteristics of the new version.

Methods

In seven populations, the questionnaire was tested among 23,361 employees during 2016-2017 in Canada, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden and Turkey. A total of 22 dimensions (measured through scales or single items) of the core, 25 of the middle, and 2 of the long version were tested. Psychometric properties of the questionnaire were calculated.

Results

All scales had satisfactory reliability. Ceiling and floor effects were present in dimensions with low or high means. Dimensions with missing values were hardly found. Most dimensions had low intercorrelations (of 190 core intercorrelations, the two highest 2 were 0.60 - 0.66, involving Quality of leadership and Vertical trust). Validations of national middle versions with slightly different items showed corresponding results.

Conclusions

The COPSOQ III questionnaire offers reliable and distinct measures of a wide range of psychosocial dimensions present in modern working life. This meets a need for both practice and research – reflected in the increased use in both contexts. The COPSOQ III questionnaire can be used in different national contexts in all parts of the world.

Reliability and validity of the COPSOQ III (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire) in Flemish healthcare workers

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Introduction and Aim

The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) is a widely used instrument for screening and managing psychosocial risk factors at work. It includes a broad range of theoretical constructs that have dominated the research field of occupational health in the past decade. The latest version - COPSOQ III – was recently developed within the international network and covers 28 different dimensions within 8 larger topic domains. The aim of this study was to assess the reliability and validity of the Flemish COPSOQ III instrument within a sample of healthcare workers.

Methods

Healthcare workers were recruited within three different institutions in Flanders. Participants provided informed consent and completed a self-administered paper questionnaire. Construct validity was considered by means of an exploratory factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha for each dimension was determined to assess internal consistency. In line with literature findings, known-groups and predictive validity were evaluated. All analyses were performed using SPSS 24 software.

Results

The sample included 248 participants (80% female; 44% older than 45 years). Results of the factor analysis showed good agreement with the proposed factor structure for the dimensions within the domains of work environment, inter-personal relations, person-work interface and values at the workplace. Within the work organization domain, the dimensions of influence at work and control of working time did not match with the factor structure. The internal consistency of the large majority of scales was acceptable to good. Dimensions of work environment and work organization showed good predictive validity towards mental health problems, i.e. burnout and stress. Moreover, these associations were more pronounced in younger employees (<45yr), confirming known-groups validity of the scales.

Conclusions

The results of this study overall support the reliability and validity of the Flemish COPSOQ III instrument in healthcare workers.

Two Years Variations in Psychosocial Factors Among Municipal Workers

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Introduction

This paper is based on a cooperation project between the university and the municipality of Sintra, which was started in order to evaluate the changes in psychosocial risk factors and establish preventive measures and health promotion programs. The aim of the present study was to determine the variations in psychosocial risk factors among a population of Portuguese municipal workers between 2015 and 2017.

Methods

The study design was prospective, based on a survey applied to the municipal workers, in 2015 and 2017. The population of municipal workers consisted of 1667 workers on both years. The response rate was 52.1% (n=868) in 2015, and 68.4% (n=1140) in 2017. The Portuguese medium version of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire II (COPSOQ II) was used to assess the psychosocial risk factors. The COPSOQ II is a standardized questionnaire covering a broad range of psychosocial factors. The results of each scale were analysed using a range from 0 to 100, where 0 represents the minimum and 100 the maximum risk.

Results

In 2015, the average results showed that workers perceived high quantitative demands [67.42±21.68], high work-family conflicts [65.58±25.54], poor perception of horizontal trust [64.68±19.82], low sense of reward / recognition [66.82±23.02], low sense of community of work [75.44±20.71], poor trust regarding management [69.14±18.60], poor auto-efficacy [74.15±16.98] and low meaning of work [72.19±19.25]. In 2017, the results for all these scales were worst. For both years, the worst result concerns the level of role clarity, with 76.26 and 77.51 points, respectively.

Conclusions

It was shown that the psychosocial risk factors perceived by the municipal workers increased in a two years period. Previous longitudinal studies have demonstrated the relevance of measuring risk factors over the time, in order to assess their impact on health and well-being of working populations.

Factors associated with high need for recovery and burnout in local police departments

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Aim

To explore associations of occupational factors with high need for recovery (HNFR) and burnout in police forces.

Methods

A cross-sectional questionnaire study in 648 subjects (72.7% participation), working in 8 local police forces. Subjects were also divided into 5 functional groups: intervention, neighborhood and traffic police, detectives and administration.

Need for recovery (NFR) was assessed by the NFR questionnaire (0–100 scale). A NFR score of >45 indicates a HNFR.

Burnout was assessed by the burnout score (0-100) of the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ II short version). A high burnout score (HBOS) was defined as a score >50.

Psychosocial factors were assessed by the short COPSOQII (10) or by scales developed within our service (7). Other considered variables: physical workload, age, gender.

Multivariate logistic regression analyses were used with HNFR and HBOS as dependent variables. In the regression model for burnout NFR was also included as independent variable.

Results

Prevalences of HNFR and HBOS were 36.6% and 18.8% respectively. Prevalences of both outcomes were significantly different between the different forces. Prevalence of HNFR was significantly different between the different forces. Prevalence of HBOS was not significantly different between the different functional groups.

In the final regression model women, older workers, physical workload, quantitative demands, organizational social capital, possibilities for development, work-life balance, bullying and discomfort from physical work environment had a significant association with HNFR.

Work-life balance, quality of leadership, role clarity and HNFR had a significant association with HBOS.

Conclusions

The single factor associated with both outcomes was work-life balance. Different factors were associated with HNFR and HBOS. HNFR was highly significant associated with HBOS.

Bridging health care and workplace: development and evaluation of a hospital-based return-to-work intervention for breast cancer patients

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

An increasing number of people younger than 60 are diagnosed with breast cancer (BC). Their need for support regarding return to work (RTW) is insufficiently met although a large amount of studies clearly indicate what should be done to support breast cancer patients' labour participation. This research aims to develop, implement and evaluate a RTW intervention for BC patients by applying this knowledge.

Methods

The "Intervention Mapping" protocol was used to develop (step 1-4) and evaluate (step 5-6) the BRUG-intervention. Process- and effect-evaluation was realised in a multi-centre study by using a mimic Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) design in which quantitative and qualitative methods (including BC patients and hospital caregivers) were combined.

Results

A 5-phased RTW intervention was developed in which content of the proposed actions, assessment-instruments, goals and stakeholders were identified for each phase. Moreover, a roadbook, a patient's logbook and a logbook for the BRUG-professional (who guides the intervention as case-manager) also were developed. In the evaluation of the intervention, 79 BC patients participated in the research, 43 in the intervention group and 36 in the control group. The RTW-intervention was not effective due to lack of uptake and follow-up time. Tough literature strongly emphasis on early start of RTW-support, practice showed difficulties to start RTW support early after diagnosis. The RTW support given was highly appreciated, due to its tailored character and the workplace visits.

Conclusions and/or implications

Systematic use of available scientific evidence let to the development of a RTW intervention that addresses BC patient needs. The evaluation of the RTW intervention's feasibility contributed to contextualizing the concepts "early support" and "tailored care" to the situation of BC patients and thus to insights in how to improve the intervention. The effect-and process evaluation enabled improvement of the intervention. Further research with a full RCT design with longitudinal follow-up is needed.

Burnout: a cross-sectional study about the relationship between personality, work characteristics and burnout

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Introduction

Burnout received a lot of attention in research, mainly because of its negative organizational outcomes. The majority of these studies focused on work characteristics, which are recognized as the largest contributors. However, the worker's personality may also play an important role. Therefore, this study investigates the relation between personality factors and burnout.

Methods

Questionnaire data were gathered in 2015 from 2174 employees, working in diverse sectors. Burnout was measured using the Utrecht-Burn-Out-Scale and consisted of exhaustion, depersonalization and competence. Personality factors were assessed with the NEO-FFI, while work characteristics were based on the "Job Demands-Resources model". The relation between personality and burnout was assessed using multiple linear regression analysis. After applying backward elimination, three job demands and four job resources, personal and demographic variables were included as control variables.

Results

713 complete questionnaires were obtained (response ratio 32,8%).

The results demonstrate that only neuroticism was related with the three burnout dimensions. Extraversion had a negative relationship with exhaustion and competence, suggesting that extravert people report less burnout.

The models explain between 47,0 and 67,6% of the variance of burnout. Although work characteristics explain the largest part of the variance, personality explained up to 17,1%. Remarkably, for the core dimension of burnout, exhaustion, personality even explains more variance (17,1%) than working conditions (14,1%).

Conclusions

Our results indicate that certain personality traits are associated with burnout.

Theoretical models and interventions for burnout should, besides working conditions, address personality factors.

Human Resource Departments and Occupational Health Services could develop new strategies to make employees aware of the risk factors for burnout including personality traits. The dimension of personality should be emphasized in trainings for supervisors on psychological well-being at work.

Society and national policies should make more efforts sensitizing the general population about burnout and the role of personality in its development.

Employability among older construction workers in the United States

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Introduction

The U.S. construction workforce is aging. Between 1985 and 2015, the average age of workers employed in the construction industry jumped 6.5 years, and the number of construction workers aged 55 years or older doubled. With the trend of an aging workforce, how to sustain employability of older workers is critical. The purpose of this study is to define employability among older construction workers in relation to job demands in this industry.

Methods

Three large data sources were analyzed, including O*NET, a primary source of occupational information in the U.S.; Occupational Requirements Survey (ORS), a new survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); and the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), a longitudinal household survey of U.S. residents age 50+. Occupational requirements were quantified by O*NET and ORS, and data from HRS (including doctor-diagnosed health conditions) were used to evaluate workers' self-rated workability. Employability among older construction workers was measured by major construction trade.

Results

The initial findings show remarkable gaps between workability among older workers and occupational requirements in construction. For example, many construction occupations require lifting/carrying > 50 lbs and ≤ 100 lbs, but some older construction workers are unable to carry 10 lbs or stretch their arms up. Moreover, workability decreases rapidly with age. The prevalence of older workers with work limitations more than doubled from 14% in the baseline to 33% in a ten-year follow-up. Detailed analyses will be performed after the 2018 ORS data are released.

Conclusions/implications

This study suggests that differentials between workability of older construction workers and their job requirements should be taken into account in defining employability. Job redesign and retraining should be available for older workers to sustain their employability. Moreover, promoting healthy aging for workers is essential in the construction industry and beyond.

Long-term exposure to heavy physical effort at work, disability pension due to musculoskeletal disorders and premature mortality

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Aim

There is insufficient evidence about the effects of long-time continuous exposure to physically demanding work. We studied the association between long-term exposure to heavy physical effort or heavy lifting and carrying at work with disability pension due to musculoskeletal disorders and with premature mortality (i.e., death during working age).

Methods

Exposure to heavy physical effort or heavy lifting and carrying at work was estimated through survey responses (Helsinki Health Study in 2000-2002), and aggregated based on occupation into job exposure matrix. The study participants included all employees of the City of Helsinki who had annual information on occupation for 8–10 years (1996–2005, n=18387). The outcome follow-up was from 2006 until 2015. The risk estimates were evaluated using competing risk survival analysis. As interaction test for 'sex × heavy physical effort' was statistically significant (p<0.001) regarding mortality, those analyses were stratified by sex.

Results

There were 530 (3%) disability pension events due to musculoskeletal disorders during the 10-year follow-up. After adjustments for sex, age, education and chronic diseases, employees in the 2nd exposure quantile (subhazard ratio [SHR]=1.46 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.05-2.05), 3rd quantile (SHR=2.73 95% CI 2.00-2.29), and the highest quantile (SHR=2.56 95% CI 1.88-3.50) had a higher risk of musculoskeletal disability pension compared to employees in the lowest exposure quantile. A total of 110 (4%) men and 266 (2%) women died during the follow-up. After adjustment for covariates, men in the 3rd exposure quantile (SHR=2.29 95% CI 1.23-4.24), and women in the highest exposure quantile (SHR=1.54 95% CI 0.99-2.41) had a higher risk of premature mortality than those in the lowest exposure quantile.

Conclusions

Long-term exposure to heavy physical effort at work is strongly associated with disability pension due to musculoskeletal disorders. This exposure also increased the risk of premature death, particularly among men.

Can flexible, “NWoW” environments lead to workers emancipation?

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Introduction

Over the past twenty years, information and communication technologies have enabled a growing number of third-sector organizations to adopt flexible, "New Ways of Working" (NWoW) environments. This innovation is presented in the managerial literature as an unique opportunity to empower workers, by boosting their autonomy and strengthening their sense of responsibility. But academic studies remain scarce on this topic. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to examine the concrete reality of this emancipatory intent by asking the following research questions : *do flexible environments emancipate workers? If so, what are the forms of domination from which workers free themselves? What are the potential limits to this emancipation?*

Methods

A case study was undertaken in a large Belgian bureaucratic company which implemented a flexible environment in 2009 with the intent of empowering their workers in the process. Data was collected through document analysis, interviews and non-participant observations. Forty-three employees were interviewed. The questions asked, based on a thematic grid of interview, were focused on understanding the concrete reality of the workers emancipation in the workplace in comparison with the initial organizational endeavor.

Results

Our results suggest that flexible environments are not intrinsically linked to a greater emancipation of workers. When emancipatory opportunities appeared, they were systematically tempered by power games and by the materiality of space. As a response, actors tried to free themselves from the regulatory constraints and managerial control with spontaneous and temporary strategies. To do so, they adopted micro-emancipations, based on the exploitation of loopholes and interpretations of rules.

Conclusion

When the NWoW environment is not conceived as a global flexible policy, it is likely to promote social control, to strengthen dominant positions and to end up being nothing more than a cosmetic change.

Time equals money?: A randomized controlled field experiment comparing four types of training vouchers

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Introduction

Demographic and technological changes demand for sustainably employable employees. Various organizations therefore encourage their workforce to participate in training through voucher programs. Most voucher programs offer employees a budget to pay the training costs, but employees may also need time to be able to participate in training. The present paper uniquely compares the effectiveness of four types of vouchers with different combinations of money and time as well as different (i.e. firm internal and external) governance on training participation.

Methods

To this end, 230 employees of a large Dutch insurance company were randomly assigned to one of the four voucher types or a control group. For eleven months, training participation was monitored and a concurrent questionnaire measured several personal characteristics as potential covariates and moderators.

Results

We find that the voucher type that allows employees to freely choose between a training budget and training days most strongly encourages training participation. Vouchers that provide employees with either working days or a training budget did not improve training participation significantly compared to the control group. Moreover, moderation analyses suggested that the training participation of employees provided with non-flexible vouchers appears to depend more strongly on personal characteristics.

Conclusions

These findings suggest that to encourage training participation organizations could best offer flexible vouchers providing employees a free choice between money and working time to spend on training. Moreover, providing training vouchers via a committed external training seems effective.

Socioeconomic and health-related childhood and adolescence predictors of entry into paid employment

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Introduction and Aims

Most studies on prolonging working careers have explored later career, while less is known about social and particularly health-related determinants of entry into paid employment and early working life span. We examined social and health-related factors from childhood and adolescence as predictors of age at entry into paid employment and early occupational class. A further aim was to examine whether own education moderates these associations.

Methods

The participants of the Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1986 were followed from their birth through 2015. We included 8542 participants (52% male) who had had a minimum of six-month employment that was defined by registered earning periods. As socioeconomic predictors, we examined low parental education at age 7 and low household income at age 16. Behavioural and health-related factors at age 16 included smoking, alcohol use, physical inactivity, overweight, length of sleep, and not having breakfast, while mental-health problems included symptoms of anxiety and depression, attention problems, and social problems. The analyses for significant predictors were further stratified by register-based level of completed own education by the age of 28-29 (low/high).

Results

After adjustments, low parental education (OR 1.55, 95% CI 1.27-1.89), smoking (OR 1.83, 95% CI 1.44-2.33) and having been drunk (OR 1.83, CI 95% 1.44-2.33) predicted early entry into paid employment (≤ 18 vs. ≥ 24 years). Similarly after adjustments, low parental education (OR 1.87, 95% CI 1.43-2.45) and smoking (OR 1.68, 95% CI 1.32-2.15) were predictors of low or non-specified (vs. high) occupational class in the first job. Low parental education predicted low occupational class in the first employment particularly among people with low own education. Mental health problems were not associated with either outcome.

Conclusions

Socioeconomic disadvantage and unhealthy lifestyle contribute to early entry into paid employment and low occupational class in the first job.

Mental ill-health and trajectories of work disability among midlife public sector employees – A 10-year follow-up study

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Introduction

We examined trajectories of work disability, indicated by sickness absence (SA) and disability retirement (DR), among midlife public sector employees with and without common mental disorders (CMD) at baseline. We also examined adverse childhood events, occupational class, limiting long-standing illness, and health behaviour as determinants of the trajectories.

Methods

A sample from the Helsinki Health Study was extracted comprising 2337 employees of the City of Helsinki. Baseline characteristics were obtained from mail surveys conducted in 2000-2 or 2007. CMD was measured by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Participants were followed between the ages of 50–59. Work disability trajectories were modelled by the annual number of SA/DR months in a group-based trajectory analysis (GBTAs). Multinomial regression was used to predict trajectory group membership.

Results

Three work disability trajectories were identified: *no work disability* (consisting 61% of the all employees), *stable/low* (30%) and *high/increasing disability* (9%). Employees with CMD were more likely to belong to the *stable/low* (relative risk-ratio 1.64 [95% confidence interval 1.30–2.07]), and the *high/increasing* (2.30 [1.62–3.27]) trajectories. Stratified models showed that the determinants of the trajectories were largely similar for those with CMD compared to those without CMD except that obesity was a somewhat stronger predictor of the high/increasing trajectory among employees with CMD.

Conclusions

Having CMD was strongly associated with a trajectory leading to early exit from employment and, to a lesser extent, a stable/low work disability trajectory. The findings have implications for potential interventions promoting work ability of employees with worsening mental health.

Job search assistance – A literature review

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Introduction

A stated goal for the Norwegian work and welfare administration (NAV) is to have science based Active Labour Market Programs (ALMPs)[1]. We have done a literature review of “Job search assistance”-program (JSA), which is widely used in Norway. The aim is to present existing literature, including the importance of participant heterogeneity

Methods

We searched for relevant studies, from January 2015 to December 2017, were identified through searches of bibliographic databases, internet search engines. Inclusion criteria was articles and reports evaluating JSA or different ALMPs, including JSA. The exclusion criteria: case studies, articles and reports solely from the employer’s perspective, articles and reports solely focusing on disabilities, and effect measured by future wage setting.

Results

A total of 16 articles and reports were selected and read in full text. None of the studies looked at JSA alone. But the program has been evaluated along with other ALMPs. The results seem to be that JSA has an overall positive effect in the short run. Furthermore, a general understanding is that JSA has different effect on different subgroups, but further research is needed.

Conclusions and implications

This literature review shows that JSA has a positive effect for many participants [2]. Furthermore, it implies the need for further research on how to identify subgroups. This can optimize the selection of participants to the program. The knowledge can generate better results for both the individual participating and improve effect of the program itself.

References

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Needs assessment for employers: a validation of the MAastricht Instrument for Sustainable Employability (MAISE)

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Introduction

In the wake of an ageing labour population, sustainable employability (SE) of employees is top priority. Several blanks exist though in the debate and research regarding SE. There is a need for a multidimensional instrument based on the employee perspective. This study aimed to develop an instrument measuring, from an employee perspective: (1) meaning of SE; (2) determinants of SE; and (3) degree of employer responsibility for SE and its determinants.

Methods

A cross-sectional online survey was conducted among 200 Dutch employees working in an industrial setting. 88.5% of the respondents were male, 38.5% were > 55 years old, and 27.5% were highly educated. The survey included measures for demographics, health proxies and self-developed items for measuring employee perspectives on SE. Data were analyzed by means of descriptive analyses, principal component analyses, and Cronbach's alphas.

Results

The MAISE consists of 4 single items and 11 scales representing 5 areas of employees' perspectives on SE: (1) meaning of SE; (2) level of employee SE; (3) determinants of SE; (4) responsibility for SE; and (5) responsibility for determinants of SE. Cronbach's alphas varied between .72 and .91. Criterion validity was very good. SE of the employees was relatively high and SE was considered a shared responsibility of employee and employer. Gender and age differences were few.

Conclusion and implications

It can be concluded that the MAISE complements other recently developed measures for SE such as the Capability set [1] and the Vitality scan [2]. This study showed the MAISE to be reliable and valid, but more validation studies are needed. Employers can use the MAISE as a needs assessment that precedes selecting or developing group level interventions for SE. By aligning to employee needs, interventions are expected to be more effective.

References

- [1] Abma et al 2016
- [2] Brouwers et al 2018

Social capital and burnout: results of a multilevel analysis in Belgian employees

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Introduction

Although social capital has increasingly been recognized as an important factor in predicting health in working environments, studies examining its relationship with burnout are scarce and mainly limited to the healthcare sector, often ignoring the clustered structure of the data. Therefore, this study aims exploring the cross-sectional relationship between both individual and organizational social capital and burnout.

Methods

Multilevel analyses were conducted on questionnaire data of 11731 employees, working in 73 companies. Data were gathered between 2010 and 2015.

Horizontal and vertical trust were derived from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. Burnout was assessed using a scale based on the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory and consisted of engagement and exhaustion.

Four multilevel models were built in which the relation between individual and organizational vertical/horizontal trust and the two burnout dimensions was estimated. Models were adjusted for common sociodemographic variables and job stressors.

Results

In line with former findings, both types of trust at the individual level are related to exhaustion and engagement.

More important is the observation that trust impacts both dimensions of burnout also at the organizational level. 6% of the variance in exhaustion and 8% of the variance in engagement is situated at the organizational level, and part of the variance between companies is related to differences in trust. Employees of companies characterized by high aggregated levels of horizontal and vertical trust reported lower levels of exhaustion. As concerns engagement, at the company level only vertical trust showed a significant positive relationship with engagement, while this could not be retained for horizontal trust.

Conclusions and/or implications

Enhancing company levels of trust, may be an interesting management strategy in the burnout prevention. Vertical trust, enabled by involvement in transparent managerial decisions, may promote engagement and prevent exhaustion. Horizontal trust, enabled by enhancing social interactions between workers, may prevent exhaustion.

Modifiable and non-modifiable factors associated with RTW and employment of people with acquired brain injury: a review of reviews

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Introduction and aim

Acquired brain injury (ABI) is a major life event that puts a high monetary and non-monetary burden on affected individuals and society. It considerably hinders sustainable employability as evidenced by many patients dropping out from the labour market prematurely. Returning to work (RTW) after ABI is important as a means of sustaining the economic self-sufficiency of a person, as a source of psychological well-being and self-worth, and as a marker of social participation. The aim of this study is to identify modifiable and non-modifiable factors associated with RTW and employment status after ABI.

Methods

A systematic review of reviews is being conducted to synthesize the evidence of factors related to RTW and employment after ABI. Multiple electronic databases were searched, including PubMed, Cochrane Library, CINAHL Complete, PsycINFO, Sage, Scopus, Web of Science, Sociological Abstracts, Academic Search Premier and ERIC, with no time restrictions applied. To include the newest findings and cover the gap years from the last review that has been published to today, an additional analysis addressing single studies will be conducted.

Results

The initial search returned 2194 articles, of which 56 reviews were retained for full text analysis and quality assessment. Effect sizes will be reported if available, and modifiable and non-modifiable biological, psychological and social factors associated with RTW and employment will be qualitatively summarized. Data extraction is ongoing with final results to be presented at the conference.

Conclusions and implications

Findings from this review will inform practitioners and people with ABI about potential protective and risk factors of dropping out of the job market. Identifying factors associated with RTW and employment will also provide practitioners with the essential knowledge to design effective interventions which are crucial to support vocational reintegration and promote employment.

Relationships between work environment factors, and need for recovery and presence of neck-shoulder complaints in younger and older office workers

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Aim

The aim of this study was to explore the relationships between work environment factors, and need for recovery (NFR) and presence of neck-shoulder complaints (NSC) in younger and older office workers.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional study in 6373 office workers (79.0% response), working in 128 organizations (both private and public). The subjects were divided into 2 age groups (<45 years and ≥45 years).

The dependent outcome variables were the presence of high NFR and NSC during the last 12 months. Experienced discomfort from physical work environment was assessed for following factors: inadequate temperature, insufficient fresh air, draughts, disturbing noise and inadequate lighting.

Sixteen work related psychosocial factors were taken into account: 12 originating from the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire and 4 developed by the research team. Other variables were: gender and age group.

Multivariate log-binomial regression analyses were used to calculate regression coefficients for the presence of high NFR and NSC, for each age group separately.

Results

Older office workers had higher prevalence rates for high need for recovery (36.8%) and neck-shoulder complaints (63.5%) and experienced less discomfort from inadequate temperature and insufficient fresh air as compared to younger workers (34.2% and 59.4% respectively).

In both age groups discomfort from physical work environment was associated with high NFR and NSC. In the older age group, insufficient fresh air was associated both with high NFR and NSC. In the younger age group, disturbing noise was associated both with high NFR and NSC, and inadequate lighting with the presence of NSC.

Conclusions

Physical work environment factors in offices should not be neglected. Office designers should pay special attention to adequate ventilation to provide sufficient fresh air, reduction of disturbing noise and providing adequate lighting.

“Fit2work” – The Austrian Consulting Service for return to work

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fit2work is the Austrian Programme for supporting companies in return to work after long sick leave. It is based on the Labour and Health Act of 2011. Fit2work is financed by the Austrian government and ESF.

fit2work can be seen as a navigation tool to combat early retirement or unemployment due to sickness. Furthermore, the programme fulfils the function of an intermediary providing guidance through the numerous services of different partner organisations, like Social Security Administration, Austrian Social Insurance for Occupational Risks, or the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection.

The key objectives of fit2work business consulting is to reintegrate employees after longer periods of sick leave and to preserve their workability-capacity on a long-term basis by taking adaptive measures. Aim is also to build up knowledge within the company for return to work, like training of an integration coordinator in the company or advising the Occupational Health Services and the Human Resources Management.

Depending on the size of the company fit2work experts support over one up to three years.

The intensity of support is adjusted to the potential for self-help and knowledge of the companies.

As screening at the beginning and the end of the programme the Work Ability Plus Index™ (WAI Plus™) is used.

Up to now over 1.500 companies of all industries have joined fit2work.

A meta-analysis based on sick leave days of fit2work companies in comparison with organisations not participating in the programme, show, that long term sick leave days reduce and employees have more stable work careers. Also different scales of the WAI Plus™ improve in most of the companies.

In our presentation we will highlight return to work concepts for different large organisations, success factors in the return to work process and share our experiences with building up in-company integration teams.

The Greek COPSOQ v.3 Validation Study, a post crisis assessment of the Psychosocial Risks in Greece.

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Acknowledgement

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Introduction and Aims

- I. To provide the Greek validated version based on the German version of COPSOQ V.3
- II. To develop and validate introduce an *agile Organizational Change Assessment Framework (OCAF)*, based on the current research findings and conclusions.

Methods

The study is a longitudinal (follow-up) study (N=1000). We use the Greek COPSOQ v.3 dimensions as Organizational Change Context and Organizational Change Impact variables. Due to a variety of corresponding management of change related studies [Oreg (2013), Smollan (2017), De Jong (2016), Van der Voet (2017), Holten (2016), Kuipers (2014)] and corresponding COPSOQ studies the above approach can be considered as important from a both “*theoretical*” and “*practical implications*” perspectives.

Results

The linguistic validation process, assessment of reliability, construct validity and the content validity of the Greek COPSOQ v.3 in collaboration with the International COPSOQ Network and F.F.A.W². The study also includes the investigation of the direct and indirect impact of emergent organizational on human capital documented with an in-depth analysis of the psychosocial cause & effect mechanisms that explain these effects.

Conclusions and/or implications

In the existing management of planned or emergent organizational change literature, many studies use a high number of variables and factors with either complex or computationally demanding models for assessing organizational change, making standard analyses (like longitudinal invariance) difficult, time consuming or not applicable at all. This study faces that deficiency, by utilizing linear, non-linear and machine learning algorithms (AI) in psychosocial-risk data analysis.

Sociodemographic differences in unemployment preceding disability retirement: a register-based case-control study

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Introduction

More evidence is needed on the process and predictors of weakening work ability among those on the path to disability retirement. This study examined how previous experiences of unemployment are associated with disability retirement in different sociodemographic groups.

Methods

A 70% random sample of disability retirees aged 25–64 from the years 2011–2015 were drawn from nationwide registers in Finland (n=54.387). Generalized estimation equations (GEE) were used to compare the level and development of pre-retirement unemployment over six years among the retirees and their sex-age matched controls drawn from the non-retired population.

Results

During the six pre-retirement years, the proportion of those experiencing unemployment among male disability retirees was on average 2.3 times higher and among females 2.1 times higher than in the control group. Unemployment increased by 8.7 days among men and by 6.3 days among women per each year of approaching disability retirement, net of aging and secular trends. Excess unemployment among disability retirees was larger among men, in younger age groups and among the less educated. Unemployment increased more among those who retired due to mental disorders. Differences between sociodemographic groups in increasing unemployment when disability retirement approached were small.

Conclusions

Increased levels of unemployment predict disability retirement several years in advance. Increasing unemployment may signal work ability problems that need to be tackled in the early stages to improve return to work.

Physical workload and sickness absence trajectories: a nationally representative follow-up study among Finnish employees

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Introduction and Aims

Physically heavy work has been linked to the risk of work disability, however, some physical work exposures can also be protective of work ability. We aimed to examine whether exposures to different physical workload factors are associated with work participation trajectories.

Methods

We examined a nationally representative cohort of working aged Finnish adults interviewed and medically examined at baseline in 2000-2001 (n=3814). Both potentially protective (sitting and keyboard use) and risk factors (e.g. handling of heavy loads and vibration) were included. All medically confirmed sickness absence periods 2002-2008 were included in the trajectory analyses to identify latent groups with similar sickness absence trends. These data were derived from the registers of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. The models were adjusted for marital status, education, smoking, alcohol dependence, leisure time physical activity, sleep problems, body mass index, job strain, social support at work, musculoskeletal disorders, other physical disorders, and mental disorders.

Results

We found a group with no or a very low level, a group with a stable low level, and a group with a high and increasing level of sickness absence. After full adjustments, prolonged sitting and use of keyboard emerged as factors associated with a lower risk of belonging to the trajectory with high and increasing sickness absence (HR 0.60; 95% CI 0.45–0.80). The risk increased with the number of physical workload factors reported, and was highest for those with four or more workload factors (HR 2.84; 95% 2.08–3.88).

Conclusions

Physical work is associated with the risk of long-term sickness absence, with the highest risk found for those with several different physical workload factors. As the risk remained after controlling for various pertinent risk factors, this highlights the need to find ways to better maintain work ability of those with the physically most strenuous work.

Do individual and work-related factors differentiate work participation trajectories before and after vocational rehabilitation?

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Introduction and aim

Understanding diverse labor market trajectories around vocational rehabilitation provides important insight into potential effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts. We examined factors associated with work participation trajectories before and after vocational rehabilitation.

Methods

Using nationwide Finnish register data of 7180 vocational rehabilitees, we constructed latent trajectory groups of work participation two years before and two years after their rehabilitation episode starting in 2008–2010. We plotted changes in labor market statuses in these groups and examined other associated factors using multinomial logistic regression.

Results

We identified four trajectories based on work participation levels before and after vocational rehabilitation. The “High–Resumed” group (35.6%) typically returned to full duties. The “High–to–Negligible” group (20.7%) typically transitioned to full disability retirement or unemployment. Among the “Medium–Resumed” (25.5%) and “Longstanding Negligible” (18.3%) groups, work disability and unemployment were common before rehabilitation, but afterwards those assigned to the former group often returned to full or partial duties. Overall, older age, male gender, living in areas with lower employment rates, having lower education, being employed in the private sector, and having mental diagnoses were associated with the other three trajectories than the most favorable “High-Resumed” trajectory. Furthermore, certain industrial sectors, job exposures, and less common diagnoses further separated specific trajectories.

Conclusions and implications

Work participation trajectories around vocational rehabilitation are diverse, only partly dependent on initial levels of work participation, and determined by various individual and work-related factors. Future nationwide studies should assess the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation taking into consideration both individual and work-related factors.

Back to work with/after cancer

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Introduction

In a context of longer careers, the risk of confrontation with cancer in the workplace increases. Figures in Flanders show that 1 in 4 employees are diagnosed with cancer and 1 in 2 employees take on the role of informal carer. In a broader perspective, the change of returning to work for long-term absentees after 1 year is only 10%. In the diagnosis of cancer, however, the chance of return is higher: 73% return to work after 18 months. Return to work is a new reality and it is crucial that the organisation has a proactive return-to-work policy.

Challenges

Practice shows that for both employee and employer are left with a lot of questions on the issue of cancer. On the shop floor, we can distinguish three critical phases.

- In the first instance, questions arise about job retention.
- During the second phase, the period of (long-term) absenteeism, it is important to maintain contact with the employee.
- In the final phase, resumption of work, there is often uncertainty about the impact of the treatment in the work place, which adjustments are desirable/possible and what the impact is on the team.

Roadmap

Successful reintegration requires an adjustment at the level of the organisation and of the individual. A return-to-work policy at organisational level provides an insight into the actors involved and their roles and responsibilities. In addition, it outlines the adaptations that are feasible for the organisation.

On an individual level, it is important to gain an insight into the possibilities and limitations of the employee in order to then formulate the changes that need to be made on the shop floor. Finally, the agreements made are formalised in a reintegration plan.

Japanese model for sustainable work over the life course

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Introduction and Aims

In Japan, the percentage of people over age 65 is 27.3% in 2016, while those of 15 to 64 is 60.3%. The average life expectancy of men and women in 2016 is 80.98 and 87.14, respectively. Healthy life expectancy of men and women is 72.14 and 74.49, respectively. Percentage of companies having retirement age of 60 and 65 was 79% and 16%, respectively. The percentage of those who expressed their willingness to work until age 70 and over the life course was 24% and 30%, respectively. These data suggests that measures for sustainable work over the life course is urgently needed in Japan. The aim of this study was to clarify the current measures for sustainable work over the life course in Japan.

Methods

Publications pertaining legislations and governmental or public measures were searched using key words such as sustainable work, retirement age, and occupational safety and health.

Results

Occupational Safety and Health Act stipulates that employers have to provide annual health checkups and stress check test for employees. Act on Stabilization of Employment of Elderly Persons stipulates that employers must implement elderly employment security measures up to the age of 65 for all employees who desire them. Japan Organization for Employment of the Elderly Persons with Disabilities and Job Seekers seek to realize a society with lifelong employment by providing various supports to increase companies where people can work regardless of their age. Japan Organization of Occupational Health and Safety started a program to secure employment of employees with diseases. Health Insurance Society provides health checkups to find employees with metabolic syndrome (MS), and provide health counseling to those who have MS.

Conclusions

Several legislations and measures were introduced, and their effectiveness should be evaluated.

Prevention by general practitioners of long-term absence from work

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

The first professional that people with mental health issues most often meet, is the general practitioner (GP). GPs are a crucial partner in the prevention of people's long-term absence from work. They can make a difference and prevent long-term absence by making a correct diagnosis and offering an effective treatment or referral. One way to support GPs in these tasks is to implement a tool in their electronic medical file. Therefore, we developed a concept of such a tool supporting GPs in the prevention of mental illness related to work and examine consensus about the tool.

Methods

We developed the tool, based on the results of a survey among 323 GPs in Flanders, a review of existing tools and by conducting five individual interviews and three expert panels with GPs, MHC users and IT-software providers from Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia. We examined consensus about the tool via a Delphi study among 43 Belgian and three multidisciplinary expert panels consisting of representatives of GPs, occupational physicians, employment services, employers and medical advisers of the insurance company.

Results

The tool enables GPs to make work discussible and to support their patient's search for a job and return to work. It offers information about the system of allowed activity, reminds GPs about the patients' right to visit an occupation physician before returning to work and provides (1) an overview of partners and their contact details and (2) information about the roles and goals of employment services (e.g. VDAB) and about the new Belgian laws on reintegration. It also offers a visual overview of incapacity for work.

Conclusions and/or implications

We conclude that GPs and the multidisciplinary experts in this study largely agree on the content, timing and format of the tool.

COPSOQ 3: International development and German Standard version

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Introduction

The COPSOQ Questionnaire (Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, versions 1 and 2) is used in Germany and approx. 20 other countries worldwide since more than 10 years in research and psychosocial risk assessment in the workplace. The development of version 3 pursues three objectives: 1. Ensuring international comparability, 2. Integration of new topics of occupational sciences and 3. Review/optimization of psychometric qualities.

Methods

While versions 1 and 2 were developed at the National Danish Institute of Occupational Medicine (ami), the further development of COPSOQ has been headed by the COPSOQ network, an association of COPSOQ-using scientific institutes (www.copsoq-network.org). In a qualitative Delphi process starting 2013 active users were questioned on the practicability and the psychometric properties of all items and scales and were asked to name potentially new important topics. Based hereon the beta version of COPSOQ 3 was developed by the end of 2015.

Results: International and German Standard version

At the end of 2017 the COPSOQ network defined the final CORE items of the COPSOQ 3 on the basis of a metaanalysis of the data from 7 countries. 28 essential CORE items relating to 17 scales were defined to be included in any version of COPSOQ 3 worldwide as a minimum basis for international comparisons. Each national team attaches other COPSOQ-items or questions from other instruments that have shown good measurement qualities in the national context. The CORE items alone are understood as a set of items to construct a COPSOQ 3 instrument with but not as a short questionnaire alone.

The German standard version of COPSOQ 3 contains a total of 85 items on 34 aspects. Duration of filling time is 18 minutes in median. New topics are, for example, the local and temporal delimitation of work, physical requirements and work engagement. This version was already applied to 50,000 employees in Germany (as of March 2018). Validation of the German standard version is conducted in synch with the international analysis (7 countries, 20,000 respondents).

Conclusions and implications

The internationally harmonised further development of COPSOQ was and is a major challenge due to the differences in working realities worldwide. But only an internationally driven process can ensure the comparability of COPSOQ data for the future.

The right leadership ... makes people tick!

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Introduction

Securex recently launched a new vision on leadership. This to help companies become more competitive, by delivering value to all stakeholders involved. The framework – what we call the ‘Leadership DNA’ – guides leaders on different levels.

Leaders stand at the rudder of continuous change. They need to embrace new opportunities and create a context - on organisational (macro) level - where they shape a climate of well-being & an environment where people can work in a successful manner, with the right motivation.

On a meso-level, the framework supports leaders by developing the functioning of their individual employees & teams. This by combining the leadership-DNA (vision and -style), along with a focus on principles of autonomous motivation & the new way of performance management (a mindset of growth & continuous reciprocal feedback).

Last, but definitely not least, we focus on developing the right leadership mindsets (micro-level).

This cocktail increases employee engagement and –productivity. That makes organisations perform at their best.

Methods

Through indepth insights, Securex - in collaboration with various specialists in the field - has developed a dynamic, robust, universal and distinctive leadership vision. A science-supported and sophisticated approach that brings sustainable leadership that transcends time, place and culture.

This vision on Leadership is strengthened thanks to a unique partnership:

- own research material, from the Securex HR Research department;
- business insights and practical experiences, from the Securex expertise centers HR Consulting;
- Health & Safety and the HR department;
- academic research material from various chairs and specific collaboration with Universities.

Results and conclusions

The right leadership creates behaviour that delivers value for the client, the organization and society as well.

Work ability through learning and development. Discussing the link between science and practice with an example of knowledge work research

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Introduction

Current megatrends, like the demographic change and the ongoing digital transformation, challenge organizations to manage high dynamics of technical and organizational adjustments with a declining size of the labour force. These challenges create a climate of uncertainty on every organizational level. As healthy and capable workers are considered to be essential for organizational success and innovations, working conditions must help employees preserving their ability to act in the uncertain environment.

Methods

We suggest that jobholders need to be prepared for meeting new demands by a job design that enables workplace learning and permanent development of vocational competencies. We report current findings from a German project relating to learning-supportive working conditions in financial, insurance and civil service sectors that is based both on survey data (N=551) and ten case studies including qualitative data from 33 interviews.

Results

We show that supportive conditions on every level (task design, supportive leadership and enabling organizational framework conditions) are positively associated to health, work ability, job satisfaction and individual development. However, this knowledge still has to be transferred and translated into the specific context of the organization. Therefore, we developed potentials on different organizational levels.

Conclusions

Learning-oriented factors of tasks, leadership and organizational culture contribute to the promotion of occupational well-being. To transfer our findings into practice, we report context-specific implications how to link field research and organizational demands.

Educational differences in working life expectancy in the Netherlands

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Aims

This study aims to provide insight into educational differences in working life expectancy (WLE) in, and working years lost (WYL) through disability benefits and other non-employment states the Netherlands.

Methods

Information of the Dutch population (N=4,999,947) between 16 and 66 year was used with monthly information on employment status from 2001 to 2015 to estimate working life courses. Across educational groups monthly transitions between paid employment and non-employment states were calculated. Using a multistate model (R-package mstate) the WLE and WYL due to disability benefits and other non-employment states were estimated, stratified by educational groups.

Results

The WLE at age 30 varied between 16.86 and 28.18 years. Despite starting in paid employment earlier, low educated men and low educated women had a 4.2 (men) and 9.5 (women) years lower WLE at age 16 than high educated men and women. Among low educated men 3.59 working years were lost due to disability benefit compared to 0.78 among high educated men. Low educated women lost 3.47 working years due to disability benefit compared to 1.38 among high educated women.

Conclusions

The working life course perspective showed large educational differences in WLE. In comparison to high educated workers, those with a low educational level lose a substantial part of their working life due to disability benefit, unemployment, and no income. The metrics of WLE and WYL provide useful insights into the life-course perspective of how health will influence duration of working careers.

Depressive symptoms and non-participation in work - results from the German longitudinal Study on Mental Health at Work (S-MGA)

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Introduction

Depressive symptoms as health determinants are acknowledged antecedents of disability pensions (dp). But dp is only one dimension of broader concepts such as early retirement and participation in work. The evidence about the effect of depressive symptoms on participation in work is sparse due the lack of representative samples with a broader age range and longitudinal design. The Study on Mental Health at Work (S-MGA) addresses this gap.

Methods

The panel was sampled from all employees in Germany being subject to social security contributions and born between 1951 and 1980 at the date of sampling from the register. The baseline consists of N= 4,511 participants who were interviewed in 2012 (baseline). The analysis is based on n=2640 participants who completed the interview at baseline and at follow-up five years later. Non-participation in work was classified according to the International Labour Organization, i.e. less than 1 hour/week in gainful employment. Cross-sectional and longitudinal associations were analysed by logistic regression.

Results

At baseline 5.5% of the respondents were not employed (12.8% at the follow-up). The cross-sectional association between depressive symptoms and lack of employment yielded an odds ratio (OR) of 1.97 (95% CI: 1.18 - 3.27) at baseline and OR= 2.62 (95% CI: 1.91 - 3.60) at follow-up. Depressive symptoms at baseline were associated with a lack of employment five years later by an OR=1.8 (95% CI: 1.25 - 2.61).

Conclusions

There are stable associations between depressive symptoms and non-participation in work within cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses. We conclude that depressive symptoms are an issue for the exit from the labor force that it is relevant for longer periods of the employment history.

From observation to application: Helping organizations in promoting sustainable employability

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Due to economic and organizational growth, and the more and more complicated nature of modern work on one hand, but a pressing labor shortage on the other, employees endure an increasing amount of work pressure and responsibilities. In order to prevent loss of productivity, burn out, or even turnover, it is important to increase our knowledge on sustainable employability (SE). Since SE of employees largely depends on the context in which they work, investigating the impact of those different organizational contexts on people's work-related well-being is of great value. As part of the 4Limburg project, a broad multi-faculty and multi-year project of Maastricht University funded by the government, several organizations in Limburg were 'scanned' with regard to current levels of SE and related factors. Employees of these organizations completed a survey measuring the various aspects of SE, as well as contextual and personal factors (previously) associated with SE. Due to the fact that participating organizations differed largely in sector and size, these surveys were tailor-made to each organization based on an explorative discussions with HR representatives. Contextual factors usually included work demands (e.g., work pressure, work load, operational control/autonomy, emotional and physical demands), social support, leadership, and organizational climate. Personal factors such as work-life balance, health behavior, work hours, and demographics were also measured. Participating organizations are active in sectors such as construction, health care, finance, law, service, and education. Results of the participating organizations will be discussed, with a focus on both context-specific and generalizable findings. Furthermore, we will deal with implications of SE in different organizational contexts and discuss possible prevention and intervention strategies.

Explaining educational inequalities in self-rated health: the role of working conditions and health behaviours

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Aims

The study investigates the mediating effect of working conditions and health behaviours in the relation between educational level and self-rated health among employed individuals.

Methods

Respondents of the longitudinal Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) in 18 European countries were selected when aged between 50 years and 64 years, in paid employment at baseline, and with information on education, working conditions, health behaviour, and self-rated health (N=13,399). Health behaviours, physical and psychosocial work characteristics were measured at baseline, while self-rated health was measured at 2-year follow up. Log linear analyses were conducted to identify determinants of poor self-rated health. Mediation was assessed by stepwise regression modelling, in which the percentage change in the relative risk of educational level on self-rated health after adjusting for the explanatory variables was calculated.

Results

Lower educated workers were more likely to be in poor health compared to higher educated workers (RR: 1.84, 95% CI 1.69-2.01). For work conditions, having a physical demanding job was the strongest mediator, followed by lack of job control and lack of job rewards. Working conditions explained about 30% of educational inequalities in self-rated health. For health behaviour, BMI was the strongest mediator, followed by smoking and alcohol use. Health behaviours explained about 18% of educational inequalities in self-rated health.

Conclusions

Preventive interventions focusing on reducing physical work demands as well as improving health behaviour may contribute to reducing educational inequalities in self-rated health.

The KivaE (Equality) questionnaire

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Introduction

Equality is an important factor in a work community and helps in reaching a sustainable and longer working life. Measures are needed to monitor the situation. Without numeric results and follow-ups, the development of equality is difficult.

Methods

The user-friendly KivaE questionnaire demonstrates the different roles of workplace actors; top-management, middle managers and employees; and indicates possible experiences of discrimination or inappropriate treatment and their impact on work wellbeing. The KivaE can also be used to improve the utilization of employee's diverse competences, regardless of sex, age, ethnic origin etc.

KivaE is an excellent tool to be used when drafting an equality plan or a gender equality plan. The current legislative requirements in Finland as well as scientific research on equality in the workplace have been taken into account in developing the questionnaire. The questionnaire has nine standard questions and can be answered in Finnish, Swedish or English.

Extra questions may be added and the respondents divided in to smaller groups according to sex, age or department etc. All features of the questionnaire – questions, results and analysis module – are available online.

Results

In 2017, Tekniikan Akateemiset (TEK - Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland), used the KivaE questionnaire among its members. 854 persons answered the questionnaire, of which 17 % reported personal experiences of discrimination (29 % of the females and 11 % of the males). The results also imply an association between personal experience of discrimination and level of work-wellbeing (1-10), with an work-wellbeing index of 4,87 among those reporting experiences of discrimination, compared to 7,42 among those not reporting.

Online cross tabulations will be demonstrated during the presentation.

Conclusions

The results indicate that the KivaE questionnaire is a useful tool for exposing inequality and inappropriate behavior at the workplace.

A study towards the implementation of Belgian legislation with regard to psychosocial risks in SMEs

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Introduction and Aim

Psychosocial problems at work are a rising issue in Belgium. Belgian legislation is available to specifically address psychosocial risks at work. However, carrying out the law effectively seems to be a challenging task especially for SMEs, who often have limited resources. The purpose of this study was to get an insight in the implementation of the legislation on psychosocial risks in SMEs.

Methods

A survey was used to measure the knowledge, attitude and practice of the legislation on psychosocial risks. Both employers and significant others who come in contact with the implementation of the legislation on psychosocial risks in SMEs were able to participate in the survey.

Results

Fifty-three people took part in the survey. The average knowledge score was 4,62 out of 10 (s.d.=1.43). Participants estimated their score even lower with an average of 3,71 out of 10 (s.d.= 2,39). The average knowledge of people working in SMEs with 0-20 employees was significantly lower than the knowledge of people who are working in SMEs with more than 20 employees ($P < 0.05$). Furthermore, it appears that as many as one in three participants were not or rather not convinced that the correct use of the legislation on psychosocial risks in his or her SME is important. Uncertainty about what they have to do is the main reason why participants do not properly apply the legislation on psychosocial risks.

Conclusions and implications

In this study the knowledge of SMEs appears to be inadequate with regard to the legislation on psychosocial risks. The results also show an opportunity to improve the attitude of people implementing the law in SMEs. Furthermore, it appears that support of SMEs for the interpretation of the legislation on psychosocial risks is desirable.

Cancer in small-sized companies: Employers' return to work experience

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Introduction

Return to work (RTW) is important for employees diagnosed with cancer. However, RTW is not obvious because of the experienced side effects of cancer. Consequently, RTW often requires work adjustments and adapted workplace conditions to be successful. Belgian employers, especially from very small enterprises, have few resources to meet the needs and wishes of cancer survivors. What are these employers' experiences and needs in this respect?

Methods

Seventeen owners (one HRM) of small enterprises (various sectors) were interviewed regarding their RTW experience. Three employers had no experience with cancer but other related experience; two had cancer experience related to work in private (close family); two had RTW experience with cancer but in larger enterprises. On reflection, we excluded the education sector. We conducted a thematic analysis and, for reliability, we made a distinction between primary (n=13) (RTW experience with cancer) and secondary interviews (RTW experience without cancer) (n=3).

Results

Four covering themes were discovered. 1) Positive and negative meaning of a small business in relation to long-term sickness absence (working without a policy, solving problems, as a family but company has to survive). 2) Meaning of cancer for the employer (aware of the life threatening disorder, of side effects, and therefore empathizing and giving assistance). 3) Concern and involvement (ensuring replacement, giving the employee elbowroom, providing work accommodation). 4) Communication (informal and unstructured). Further, various employers' needs were expressed.

Conclusions

Small enterprises (<100) differ regarding meeting RTW needs after cancer. Variation was observed in the employers' personal experience and the employee attitudes (before and after RTW). In addition, the business culture and the concrete RTW options varied. In general, small enterprises have specific good opportunities to support RTW, related to the close relationships. However, the main concern of very small enterprises is that they run great financial risks.

Work addiction and its relationship to the Self-determination theory, work outcomes, health and job characteristics

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Work addiction or workaholism is characterized by an irresistible inner drive to work very hard; it is a combination of working compulsively and excessively. The present study investigated in a representative sample of 1552 Belgian workers the prevalence of work addiction in the Belgian working population. We also checked the relationship with job characteristics, work outcomes, impact on work life balance, health, stress, absenteeism, and burn-out. We also link workaholism to the four types of motivation as mentioned in the self-determination theory (intrinsic, identified, introjected and extrinsic). In this study we measured work addiction by means of a short version of the DUWAS, consisting of two core-components: Working Excessively (WE - 3 items) and Working Compulsively (WC – 3 items). Main conclusions are that 17% scores high on both WE and WC, and can thus be labelled as a workaholic. 66% of the workaholics states that their work has a bad influence on their health. They experience stress more often (83%) as compared to the non WC and WE workers (40%). 25% has a increased risk on burn-out. Workaholics report themselves longer and more frequent absent from their work due to sickness. Moreover, they experience less fun in their job. Finally, interesting relationships were found with central concepts of the self-determination theory. Workaholics score high on both autonomous and controlled motivation.

Associations between types of office workspaces, work environment factors and physical complaints

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Aim

This study aimed to explore the perceived work environment and physical complaints in different types of office workspaces.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional study in 4404 subjects, working in both private and public organizations. Seven types of office workspaces were considered: with distinction between fixed and non-fixed places, open space and non-open space and taking into account the number of people in the office (one to four people).

Five perceived work environment factors were considered: dissatisfaction with ventilation, with artificial lighting, with air quality, with temperature and discomfort from disturbing noise.

Two physical complaints were considered: eye complaints during or after work and recurrent headaches during work.

Other variables included: age, gender and hours of computer work per week.

Multivariate logistic regression analyses were used to calculate the odds ratio for the presence of the considered work environment factors or physical complaints separately. A fixed place in an office intended for one person was used as reference in the analyses.

Results

Fixed place in an open office with at least five people was found to be the most prevalent type of office workspace with 34.6%.

An increased risk of dissatisfaction with environmental factors were mainly found in workspaces with fixed places in an open space office.

In general, home based computer workers had most favorable environment factors.

Overall, there was a trend in which an increasing risk was found with increasing number of people in an (open space) office.

Employees in office types with unsatisfactory ventilation, artificial lighting and dry air had the highest risk to develop eye and headache complaints.

Conclusions

This study confirms earlier findings and stresses the need to take these decisive factors into consideration when designing office workspaces.

Organizational social capital: the missing link between organizational culture and safety awareness

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Introduction

OHS has known a certain waves to prevent injuries and worker's drop out. First we mainly implemented technical measures. In the 1990's management systems brought us organizational measures. Only since the 21th century we are aware of the vital part of the individual (who uses the technics according to the management system). So the workers behaviour (safety awareness) is the missing link between technical and organizational measures. The aim was to explore the relation between organizational culture and safety awareness.

Methods

17400 employees, working in 128 (private and public) organizations (79.0% participation), filled out a self-completed questionnaire. Group level analyses on company level were performed to explore the relationship between organizational social capital (OSC) and 4 safety parameters: importance of safety in the organization, presence of clear safety rules, recognition working practices and knowing whom to turn to.

Organizations were divided according to size (<50, 50-99, 100-199, ≥200 employees). 113 organizations were grouped into 10 similar activity groups.

Prevalence rates of the considered safety parameters were calculated by organization size and activity group.

Relationships between OSC and safety parameters were explored within same activity groups by correlation coefficients.

Results

Analyses by company size revealed similar patterns in safety parameters: companies <50 scored best, followed by companies between 100-199, companies between 50-99 and worst in companies with ≥200 employees.

Safety parameters scored best in construction and industries, while information and communication companies scored worst.

Depending on activity group and considered safety parameter R^2 reached up to 0.87 ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion

The results indicated a clear link between organizational culture and safety awareness according to company size, but regardless activity group. The strong relationship between OSC and safety parameters indicates a predominant role of OSC within a preventative approach in safety management.

Job satisfaction and quality of home care: results of the European IBenC study.

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

Providing high quality of home care for older persons is an important challenge. A characteristic of care professionals that is associated with quality of care, is job satisfaction. The aim of this study is to explore associations between job outcomes such as job satisfaction and quality of home care.

Methods

Data of the European IBenC study was used. Home care professionals (n=1067) across 31 organizations and six countries filled out a questionnaire based on existing scales such as the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire and Scheduling Dissatisfaction to measure job outcomes. interRAI quality of care indicators and interRAI quality summary scales were calculated based on longitudinal data about the health and functional status of 2884 care dependent older persons. To identify the strongest associations stepwise multiple regression analyses were performed.

Results

Associations between the job outcomes and the quality of care indicators and summary scales were low (Beta between 0.09 and 0.37). Job satisfaction, scheduling dissatisfaction and meaning of work were the most strongly associated job outcomes with quality of home care quality indicators. The two summary scales were mainly associated with job satisfaction and the Scheduling Dissatisfaction Scale.

Conclusions and/or implications

Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work schedules seem to be the job outcomes most strongly associated with quality of care in the European home care setting. In order to provide high quality to clients, care professionals need to be cared for as well. Further research is needed to study elements associated with job satisfaction and the Scheduling Dissatisfaction Scale.

Work environment and quality of home care: results of the European IBenC study.

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

Because of societal changes, continuous investment in quality of home care remains necessary. A healthy working environment enables care professionals to do the right things in a correct way, which then leads to excellent client care, and the desired outcomes for care organizations and care professionals. The aim of this study is to explore work environment elements associated with quality of home care in Europe.

Methods

This study is framed within the European seventh framework program 'Identifying best practices for care-dependent elderly by Benchmarking Costs and outcomes of community care' (www.ibenc.eu). Across six European countries, 1067 home care professionals of 31 organizations filled out a survey which mainly consists of validated scales such as the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire, the Copenhagen Burn-out Inventory and the Physical Workload Scale. In order to establish the quality of care, 23 interRAI quality indicators and two quality scales were calculated by means of longitudinal data on the health and functional status of 2884 care dependent older persons. To explore associations stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted.

Results

The work environment elements that were associated with the quality of care indicators and summary scales were of a mixed nature. The presentation will show which working environment characteristics were associated the strongest with quality of care.

Conclusions and/or implications

In order to provide high quality of care, it is important to care for the clients and for the care professionals. By working on a healthy work environment, it is possible to care for both of them. This study will provide information on the work environment elements associated with quality of care.

Consequences of psychological test use in the personnel selection of older candidates

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Introduction

A fair personnel selection is particularly important for keeping people employed. Psychological tests, especially cognitive ability tests, can be reliable and valid elements of the selection procedure. There are tests which have a positive impact, no impact or an adverse impact on the hiring rates of older candidates. Adverse impact can be justifiable if the work situations ask for competencies on which younger persons perform better, like mental processing speed or fluid intelligence. Yet, in many cases, the work situation asks for experience or other competences on which older candidates perform the same or even better than younger candidates. A careful selection of psychological tests in the selection procedure can prevent unnecessary adverse impact for older candidates.

Methods

We have analyzed the positive, neutral or adverse impact of 12 of our cognitive tests and social judgment tests, as well as the impact of personality test measurements. Most of our research is based on Dutch-speaking Belgian candidates. We have computed correlations of test scores with age and year of birth, and also the effect sizes of difference in mean scores between age groups. We compared our results with those reported in the research literature.

Results

We have found cognitive tests in which older candidates obtain higher mean scores, tests with equal mean scores and test with lower mean scores, taking account of other factors, especially education level and the 'Flynn effect'. In general, the kinds of tests having positive or adverse impact were the same as in other studies.

Conclusions

We will give advice about which kind of tests you can use in order to minimize an adverse impact of psychological tests. Furthermore, we will discuss the benefits and disadvantages of comparing test results with separate norms per age group.

Work ability in nursing: the role of relative heart rate reserve and work-related stress

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

Western countries are facing a demographic evolution which induces an increase of the retirement age. As a result, the workforce is gradually ageing and a higher number of employees suffer from health problems. Questions are raised regarding the feasibility of professions with high physical and mental workload, such as nursing. Work ability is a concept to achieve insight into nursing. First, the association between the subjective perception of current work ability and the relative heart rate reserve (%HRR) was investigated. Second, the role of the psychosocial work environment according to the Job Demand-Control-Support model, as a moderator in that association was analysed.

Methods

83 nurses at University Hospital Ghent, including 15 men and 68 women, underwent the test procedure, containing questionnaires about the subjective perception of current work ability, using the Work Ability Score (WAS), and three different work stressors (job demands, job control and social support), using the Dutch version of the Job Content Questionnaire. Finally, objective registrations of the ambulatory heart rate were executed to calculate the mean %HRR at work.

Results

No significant association between %HRR and WAS was observed. Multiple linear regressions demonstrated that job control and social support were significantly and positively associated to WAS and that job demands and social support moderated the association between %HRR and WAS. In the stratified analysis, the Spearman correlation showed a tendency towards a positive association between %HRR and WAS among nurses with low social support.

Conclusions and/or implications

The results imply the importance of involving the psychosocial work environment in further research on the work ability of nurses, which is highlighted by the significant positive relationship of the WAS with job control and social support. Future studies are needed to verify the current statements, using a more extensive group.

The development of a practical total worker framework to increase sustainable employability in a large international waste company

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Introduction

Increasing sustainable employability for all workers remains a major challenge for companies. A total worker approach (such as the well-known holistic model of work ability developed by Prof. Juhani Ilmarinen) is crucial to be successful. Translating a total worker approach to the needs of the company and its workers creates openness to discuss sustainable work topics and helps to implement a sustainable employability vision successfully. This case illustrates the practical elaboration of a large international waste company's vision to increase sustainable employability for their workers.

Methods

In waste company employing >1500 workers, a practical framework was developed by a group consisting of workers and HR. Hereafter, the framework was validated by the companies' occupational health physician and management.

Results

The framework was visualized as a subway map with four subway lines representing the domains: health, competence, satisfaction, and work-life balance. Each line has different stops representing the topics contributing to a sustainable organization with healthy workers (e.g. healthy lifestyle, safety, sharing knowledge). In several stops, several lines (sustainable employability domains) are crossing each other.

Conclusion

The developed framework illustrates the importance of a holistic sustainable employability approach. The subway map made the company's vision visible, and helped workers to get familiar with it. Furthermore, it created openness to discuss sustainable employability topics and to give substance to it on different levels (individual, group, organization). The developed framework may inspire other companies to promote sustainable employability for all workers.

When people do not realize their career desires: towards a theory of career inaction

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Aim(s)

Career decisions are at the core of the career literature. Most theories on career decisions – and accordingly, most empirical studies – have addressed either the career decision making process or the career enactment process, i.e., the process of acting on and realizing the change a person decided to make. An implicit assumption underlying many of these theories is, consistent with rational decision making perspectives, that career decisions are generally enacted and in the end realized. Career inaction, i.e., the failure to act sufficiently during a prolonged period of time on a desired change in work-related positions, has received almost no attention in the career literature so far. In this presentation, we argue that without explicit consideration and inclusion of career inaction in career studies, people's career paths, experiences and outcomes cannot be fully understood. Building on the psychology of doing nothing, we discuss mechanisms that explain why career inaction may occur, outline how career inaction is likely to be affected by decisional and contextual factors and explore the potential impact of career inaction on people's emotions, attitudes, behaviors and sense of self. We develop several research propositions which may guide career researchers to think about and include career inaction in their future studies.

The evolution of absenteeism in the Belgian private sector

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Introduction

Employee absenteeism due to illness or non-work-related accidents has been on the rise since 2001. Governments, organizations, and employees all have different yet important stakes in decreasing these numbers across the board. The goal of this study is to explore the previously upward trend in absenteeism by comparing current absenteeism data to that of previous years. When taking a closer look at this evolution, the duration and frequency of absences are also considered.

Methods

A yearly 'absenteeism' barometer, in effect since 2001, indicated employee absenteeism in the Belgian private sector from 2001 to 2017 for the purposes of this study, also forming a basis for new government and organizational absenteeism policy. Our sample in 2017 contained 27,184 employers and 234,358 from the private sector, proving to be representative of status (blue-collar vs white-collar), sex, age, and for organizational size up to 1000 employees. A weighting factor was used for regions. We used rough absenteeism data registered by the employers and calculated different indicators for absenteeism.

Results

Results demonstrated that absenteeism has continued to increase in 2017. While short absenteeism (less than one month) remained stable from 2016 to 2017, long absenteeism (longer than one year) and middle-long absenteeism (between one month and one year) increased significantly. However, employees were not more frequently absent from their work in 2017 as in 2016, and the percentage absent employees decreased.

Conclusions

Possible explanations for the continued increase in absenteeism may be due to the aging employee population which continues to increase each year, the evolution of the mental and physical health of employees and growth in the health and well-being sector. Further, the stable and decreasing numbers may be attributed to recent policy initiated by the Belgian government and organizations to stimulate employee re-integration.

How to tackle absenteeism in SME's

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Introduction

Absenteeism remains a relevant challenge in today's labor market and is an important challenge for organizations. Both large and small-and-medium (SME's) are impacted by employees who are absent due to illness or non-work-related accidents. However, it remains unclear as to how absenteeism may differ in organizations of varying sizes. The current study explores these differences in an attempt to create a clearer picture of absenteeism for different organizations.

Methods

A yearly 'absenteeism' barometer, in effect since 2001, indicated employee absenteeism in the Belgian private sector from 2001 to 2017 for the purposes of this study, also forming a basis for new government and organizational absenteeism policy. Our sample in 2017 contained 27,184 employers and 234,358 from the private sector, proving to be representative of status (blue-collar vs white-collar), sex, age, and for organizational size up to 1000 employees. A weighting factor was used for regions. We used rough absenteeism data registered by the employers and calculated different indicators for absenteeism.

Results

Results demonstrate an increase in absenteeism dependent on organizational size. The bigger the organization, the higher the absenteeism. In addition, results indicate some other interesting differences. Micro-organizations (with less than 10 employees) seem to have the longest average absences (even in comparison to the largest organizations). However, the bigger the SME (up to 250 employees), the less long employees are absent but the more frequently employees take sick leave (even in comparison to the largest organizations). The largest organizations (between 500 and 1000 employees) have the highest total absenteeism, largely due to the high levels of both long average absences in these organizations as well as high frequencies of absences.

Conclusions

Possible explanations are given for the results, as well as some advice on tackling absenteeism in large companies versus SME's.

Evolution of burn-out in Belgian companies

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Introduction

Burn-out has gained relevance over the years, having various costs for employers and employees. Employee physical and psychological health are detrimental to organizational well-being and productivity. This study investigates the evolution of burn-out from 2014 to 2017 answering some of the following research questions: Is burn-out something we still need to be worried about? Which groups have a higher risk for burn-out? What are the possible causes of burn-out?

Methods

Data was gathered using online questionnaires for a bi-yearly benchmark study by Securex. The burn-out questionnaire was based on the Utrecht's Burn-out Scale (UBOS), a Dutch equivalent of the most commonly used burn-out scale: Maslach Burn-out Inventory (MBI). Burn-out was defined as a syndrome with three symptoms: exhaustion, mental distance, and decreased self-esteem or impaired emotional control. Further, our sample in 2017 contained 1,552 Belgian employees, 914 being white collar employees. The sample was representative for sex, age, status (blue-collar vs white-collar), and region on the Belgian labor market. Our sample in 2017 contained 526 Belgian white collar employees and was representative for sex and age. The fact that the sample was not representative for region does not affect these results, because the regions do not differ significantly in terms of symptoms of burn-out.

Results

In the last three years, the risk for burn-out has increased by about 70% among Belgian white collar employees. In 2017, this risk was especially high for employees between the age of 35 and 39. In addition, full-time employees had a higher risk for burn-out than part-time employees. White collar and blue collar workers had an equal risk for burn-out.

Conclusions

Burn-out is becoming an increasingly important challenge for employers and employees. Possible explanations are given for the results, as well as some advice on tackling burn-out.

The Driving Power of Development HRM and Employee Outcomes Across the Life-Span

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Co-promotors: Prof. BIJM van der Heijden, HPLM Korzilius PhD, BJM Emans PhD, AH de Lange PhD

Most developed countries face a so-called 'age quake' (Tempest, Barnatt, & Coupland, 2002, p. 489), which refers to the simultaneously shrinking and graying global workforce, resulting from low birth rates and increased longevity of life (Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2013). In order to find ways to enable workers to prolong their working life, organizations might require adjustments in Human Resource Management (HRM) (De Lange, Kooij, & Van der Heijden, 2015).

In my PhD thesis I aimed to examine what contribution HRM can make onto a workforce in general, and specifically onto an ageing workforce. Using mixed methods it has shown that particularly the impact of HRM with a developmental character plays an important role in this respect. Specifically, development HRM such as 'continuous development', 'task enrichment', 'regular training', and 'participation in decision-making' affect employee outcomes positively, regardless of age.

Thus, in line with the robust results of this thesis, it is important to provide and facilitate appropriate, mostly development HRM, whether, 'age aware' or 'age free'. For bridge workers an optimized sustained relationship with managers and colleagues in which respect, trust, and loyalty flourish, seems to be the 'holy grail'.

During the presentation I'll deepen the insights on these issues mentioned. Furthermore I will show the research that have been conducted after completion of the PhD in 2016.

Solutions and needed support to participate in work: Perspectives of people with a chronic disease

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Introduction

People with a chronic disease are increasingly expected to manage their own disease and work. Therefore, we explored which solutions people with a chronic disease use to maintain- or return to work, and the support they require to identify or implement these solutions.

Methods

Solutions and support requirements of people with a chronic disease were explored using focus groups. Participants were recruited through a research institution's patient panel, a patient federation and personal networks. Analysis was conducted through open and selective coding.

Results

Five focus groups were held including 19 participants with different diagnosis. Solutions that were identified included learning to accept and cope with the disease, frequently with support from family and friends. Disclosing the disease to employers and colleagues, identifying active ways to help with duties, and implementing adaptations to the work environment were all effective solutions with the help, empathy and understanding of people in the work environment. Solutions mostly supported by patient associations included providing sufficient information about the disease, relevant help and protective legal regulations regarding work participation. Finally, health professionals could support solutions such as incorporating periods of rest, promoting self-efficacy and gaining insight into an individual's ability to participate in work.

Conclusions

People with a chronic disease want to have an active role and use various solutions to participate in work. Employers, colleagues and occupational health professionals are highly important in providing support. Also patient associations, friends and family can help to identify and implement suitable solutions.

Poster presentations

Differences in biological aging in truck drivers in Ukraine

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Aim

To reveal the tempo and differences in biological aging in truck drivers working in Ukraine for international road transportation.

Methods

A total of 58 truck drivers aged 28-65 y.o. (mean±SD: 47,7±10,1 yrs) were observed using Voitenko's method to investigate their biological aging: blood pressure (BP) systolic and diastolic, heart rate, duration of breath holding at an inhale and static balancing were registered; the 29-point questionnaire was filled in by each driver. Data were analysed at $p < 0,05$.

Results

The rate of biological aging in truck drivers outpaced their peers for $0,55 \pm 1,64$ years, which corresponds to the mean population rate of aging. In this, 21% of drivers showed sharply accelerated rate of aging, 14% - delayed rate, 24% - mean population rate, 14% - accelerated, 27% - sharply accelerated rate. BP in drivers corresponded to the high-norm level ($135 \pm 2 / 86 \pm 1$ mm Hg). 49% of them showed an increased BP corresponding to mild (28%) or moderate (21%) hypertension, 21% - high-norm BP. About 65% of subjects complained of back pain and deterioration of sight, 50-55% - of sleep problems and joint pain, about 40% - of forgetfulness, shortness of breath and meteorological dependence, 34% - of decreased performance. In this, back pain complaints were accompanied by complaints of deterioration in hearing, memory and concentration ability – occupationally vital functions; deterioration of sight – by hearing and memory problems, higher BP, mean-dynamic and pulse pressures.

Conclusions

41% of truck drivers showed accelerated or sharply accelerated rate of aging, 49% - hypertension. The most common complaints were accompanied with significant increase in BP and complaints of deterioration in occupationally vital psychophysiological functions. The results received give the reason to qualify truck drivers as an occupational group of the certain risk of disease development, disability and death, evidencing the need for preventive measures.

Lifelong employment: factors related with desired retirement age and job depletion. Results of a questionnaire based analysis within Provikmo

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Introduction

A combination of an ageing population with declining birth rates is one of the most important challenges of the labor market in Western countries. In many countries, retirement age has been raised to face the decreasing proportion of population at work. Although awareness is growing that the gap between the legal and actual retirement age should be diminished, workers are often not willing or not capable to work until their legal retirement age. This study aims to examine determinants of desired retirement age and a job depletion scale.

Methods

Questionnaire data of 195 employees, working in an occupational health service, were gathered in May 2017. The questionnaire was based on the instrument used in the Vlerick Business School study from 2006 [1]. Linear regression analysis was applied to identify determinants of desired retirement age and job depletion. Independent variables were socio-demographics, job involvement, stress perception, work pressure and health, need for time, self-development, material and career aspiration.

Results

The results showed that the desired retirement age was 62.8 years. Educational level, stress perception and work pressure were significantly related to the desired retirement age, while stress perception and work pressure, health and the need for self-development were related to the job depletion scale.

Conclusions and/or implications

Current results show that the desired retirement age is higher in comparison to the study of 2006. Despite the improvement, there is still a gap between the legal (65 year) and desired retirement age (62.8 year). Therefore, our study suggests that enough attention should be paid to job content and the psychosocial work environment. Furthermore, the results also indicate that human resource managers should develop strategies to adapt work to individual needs as to succeed in "lifelong" employment.

Reference

[1] Mobilise, dynamise and enthusiasm our (future) silver fleet on labour market [Mobiliseren, dynamiseren en enthousiasmeren van onze (toekomstige) zilvervloot op de arbeidsmarkt]

Change of employer/job upon return-to-work and self-rated health, self-esteem, and self-efficacy

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Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine whether change of employer and/or job upon return-to-work after work-related injuries and diseases is related to health outcomes using self-rated health, self-esteem, and self-efficacy as indicators.

Methods

Data from the Panel Study of Workers' Compensation Insurance in Korea was used in this study. A total of 1,610 workers who returned to work after work-related injuries and diseases were included. The workers were divided into four groups according to the return-to-work characteristics: same employer, same job (n=660); same employer, different job (n=57); different employer, same job (n=318); and different employer, different job (n=575). Self-rated health, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale score, and Self-Efficacy Scale score were used as outcome variables.

Results

Compared to workers who returned to the same employer and same job, those who returned to the same employer but a different job were less likely to report good self-rated health (odds ratio [OR], 0.54; confidence interval [CI], 0.30–0.97). Furthermore, those returning to a different employer but the same job were less likely to report good self-rated health (0.47, 0.35–0.64) and high self-esteem (0.73, 0.55–0.96) and those returning to a different employer and different job were less likely to report good self-rated health (0.49, 0.38–0.63), high self-esteem (0.68, 0.54–0.86), and high self-efficacy (0.66, 0.52–0.83).

Conclusions and/or implications

Change of employer and/or job was related to health outcomes. Therefore, returning to the same employer and same job should be set as a goal in the vocational rehabilitation process.

Psychosocial and organizational risk factors associated with presenteeism among Latvian employees

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Introduction and aim

Sickness absence is one of the major concerns for organizations, but over the last fifteen years, presenteeism has emerged as an important organizational phenomenon. Presenteeism at workplace is defined as being at workplace while having an illness.

Aim is to study the associations between psychosocial and organizational risk factors with presenteeism at work during the last 12 months among Latvian employees.

Methods

Data (n = 6762) from a cross-sectional study "Work conditions and risks in Latvia" collected from surveys in 2006, 2010 and 2013 were used. Self-reported data were gathered during computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) at respondent's residence. Respondents with Multiple logistic regression was used for statistical analysis.

Results

When adjusting for age, gender, education and work experience the odds of presenteeism were higher for employees who were exposed to conflicts either with management (OR 2.53; CI 95% 2.06-3.10) or with colleagues (OR 2.00; CI 1.66-2.41), or clients (OR 1.70; CI 1.41-2.06), as well as internal competition among colleagues (OR 1.85; CI 1.54-2.22). Higher odds of presenteeism was also for employees reporting physical (OR 2.17; CI 1.64-2.87) or psychological (OR 2.63; CI 2.17-3.20) abuse threats at workplace and shortage of time for carrying out one's job duties (OR 2.46; CI 2.05-2.95).

Respondents who were satisfied with their job (OR 0.41, CI 0.33-0.49) and those who reported having an influence on their work tasks (OR 0.69, CI 0.58-0.83) and work pace (OR 0.70, CI 0.58-0.85) have lower odds of presenteeism. Presenteeism is more common for employees working overtime work (OR 2.33, CI 1.93-2.80) or at night (OR 1.27, CI 1.02-1.59). Presenteeism is less common for those who work at one workplace comparing to those who work at more than one workplace (OR 0.70, CI 0.53-0.93).

Conclusions

Exposure to different psychosocial and organizational risk factors at work increase the odds of presenteeism.

Functioning of cardiovascular system and work place factors of telephone operators in Ukraine

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Aim

To reveal the differences of cardiovascular system (CVS) functioning in telephone operators along with an assessment of their working conditions.

Methods

A total of 59 telephone operators (women aged 30-55 y.o. (mean±SD: 40,7±6,6 yrs)) at digital telephone stations of long-distance communication were examined by measured heart rate, blood pressure systolic and diastolic (BPs, BPd). Hemodynamic parameters were calculated. Bloodcirculation effectiveness was evaluated using Buzunov's classification (1991). Work place factors were studied by parameters of work intensity and heaviness, noise, microclimate, intensity of electromagnetic fields, air ion concentration. Data were analysed at $p < 0,05$.

Results

In 27% of telephone operators the levels of the registered BP corresponded to the hypertension, in 19% - to the high-norm level (according to WHO-ISH Guidelines, 1999). Nobody showed normal type of bloodcirculation self-regulation, cardiac type showed 70% of subjects, vascular type – 30%. Using regression analysis, it was found that the transition of bloodcirculation effectiveness from the "average class" to "below average" occurred at 48 y.o., from the "below average" to "low" - at 58 y.o.; BPs passed into the zone of high-normal level at 48 y.o., BPd – at 58 y.o.

Leading harmful work place factor was high work intensity (high neuro-emotional tension, high information traffic density, prolonged duration of concentration, working night shifts). Also harmful levels of noise (72-76 dBA eqv while maximal allowable level is 65 dBA) and harmful microclimate (heating air temperature up to 25°C in winter while 22-24°C is optimal) and high air velocity (especially because of air conditioners in summer)) were registered.

Conclusions

Unfavourable changes in CVS functioning in telephone operators in Ukraine were revealed since 48 y.o. (12 years prior to the pensioned age) that could be caused by harmful work conditions. The improvement of work conditions is required to maintain health and workability of telephone operators.

Optimizing basic medical consultations for job students: the implementation of a new procedure in a Belgian service company

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Introduction

In Belgium, people aged <18 years are obliged to undergo a basic medical examination before starting a job. However, this is often perceived as ineffective and cost prohibitive given (1) the lack of resources (e.g. low number of occupational physicians), and (2) the low necessity because of the general good health of young people and the low-risk functions for student jobs. Therefore, a new procedure was developed and implemented aiming to optimize medical consultations for student jobs.

Methods

In 2016, an online questionnaire was developed by medical experts in the field of occupational health to determine the necessity of a one-to-one medical consultation with an occupational health physician (OHP) for low-risk functions. The questionnaire (28 questions) includes topics such as general state of health, diseases, vaccination, and health complaints. An additional question assesses the wish to talk to an OHP. After completing the questionnaire, students receive basic information on what to do in case of accidents at work or illness.

Based on the answers, the OHP validates the questionnaire without seeing the student (aiming at 90%), or invites the student to visit an OHP (aiming at 10%).

The procedure was implemented and tested in a large Belgian service company (employing >5000 workers) in the period 2016-2018.

Results

By March 2018, 1264 students were invited to fill out the online questionnaire of which 34.57% were completed. The procedure indicated the need to visit an OHP in 3.43% (n=15) of the completed questionnaires.

Conclusion

The implemented procedure covered the current needs (more OHPs, more efficient organization) and could be broadened to other low-risk functions and companies. However, a better follow-up is needed to increase the response rate of the target group. This project also highlighted the need for a law reform allowing a different organization of the current occupational health surveillances.

Rate of return to work in cancer survivors in Japan: Systematic review

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Aims

The rate of return to work (RTW) in cancer survivors (CSs) in Japan is unclear due to the absence of the relevant national surveillance. We conducted a systematic review to explore the rates.

Methods

We extracted papers using the databases, PubMed, Scopus, CINAHL, and ICHUSHI (Japanese), and the searching terms “Cancer (*Gan* in Japanese) + RTW (*Fukusyoku*) or Employment (*Shurou*) + Japan (*Nippon*).” We selected original articles published in 2005 or later in which a medical doctor confirmed cancer diagnosis and an RTW rate was presented. A weighted mean RTW rate was calculated. Risks of biases were evaluated using the Risk of Bias Assessment Tool for Nonrandomized Studies. To assess reporting biases, we compared between the cancer incidence in the working-age and the number of CSs reported in our adopted papers using chi-square test.

Results

Of 511 extracted papers, 13 were selected. The weighted mean RTW rate was 76.1% (95% confidence interval (CI): 74.4 – 77.8%). The rates varied according to the primary site of cancer – stomach (weighted mean: 86.3%; 95% CI: 82.6 – 90.0%), breast (71.6%; 66.7 – 76.5%), female genitals (79.6%; 75.3 – 84.0%). The interval between diagnosing cancer and ascertaining RTW ranged from 1 month through more than 10 years. We found some risks of biases. Cross-sectional studies only dealt with CSs who survived for a certain while after cancer was diagnosed. Some papers did not fully show the stage and treatment. The subjects with breast cancer were less, and those with uterus cancer were more frequently reported than the incidence ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

The RTW rate in CSs in Japan was as high as those in the other developed countries. A biased selection of CSs could have overestimated the RTW rates. An incomplete consideration of cancer stage and treatment could limit the appropriate interpretation of the present results.

Physiological features of labor in modern dairy farms

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Introduction

Agriculture workers are one of the most numerous professional groups in Ukraine. Work in milk production industry has a number of features - shift work, cyclicity, intensity, psychological factor - working with animals, the risk of injury.

Physiological and occupational studies were conducted among workers in farms that performed a variety of professional duties. All examined were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of machine milking operators on a circular apparatus, the second group - to milk pipe.

Methods

Physiological studies were conducted to determine the functional state of workers and its changes under the influence of labor activity. The heart rate, blood pressure in the dynamics of the shift were studied. In addition, we studied the indicators characterizing the state of memory, attention, speed of a simple visual-motor reaction, muscle strength and muscular endurance. A vegetative index was calculated. The integral index of fatigue was calculated, which was based on data of individual physiological changes occurring in the body under the influence of labor activity in comparison with the initial state.

Results

The results of the fatigue indicators suggested that monotonous work-milking at the milking plant-is more tiring for workers than the less mechanized, but more varied, milk pipe work. However, with the increase in the severity of labor, its "cost" for women workers increases. On the basis of all the obtained indicators reflecting the functional state of the organism, integral curves of the performance index were constructed. Comparison of the nature and working conditions with the dynamics of working capacity and fatigue indicators made it possible to calculate the time necessary for workers of each of the groups for regulated rest, which can help to prevent overfatigue.

Conclusions

Work schedules were constructed for each group to prevent adverse effects of both working conditions and the work process.

The effect of bullying on the need for recovery amongst Belgian workers. How crucial is the role of the manager and the confidential advisor?

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

In our daily practice, prevention advisors psychosocial aspects like us, often face workers who feel victim of bullying. In our contacts, we observe how deeply this issue may affect them. This study inventories the importance, for organizations, regarding sustainable employability, to take action and what role the manager and/or the internal confidential advisor play in this.

Methods

This cross-sectional study was based on data of 128 organizations (both private and public) with a participation rate over 60%, who used the “Well-being Indicator” as a risk assessment tool in 2015/2016. Eventually, the study population consisted of 17,400 subjects (79% participation rate). Need for recovery was assessed by the need for recovery scale questionnaire (0–11 scale). Mean NFR scores were calculated, differences between groups were tested by t-tests. We also examined the authors of bullying (colleagues, manager, third parties). The manager’s commitment was measured by the items “How often is your manager willing to listen to your problems at work?” and “How often do you get help and support from your manager”. Knowledge of the confidential advisor was measured through the item “Do you know the confidential advisor and/or the external prevention advisor psychosocial aspects?”.

Results

Workers subject to bullying (9,7%) experience a higher need for recovery than those who are not (6,63 vs. 4,05; $p=0,00$). The effect is greater for desk workers, subject to bullying, (as compared to non-desk workers subject to bullying) (6,93 vs. 6,49; $p=0,03$) and workers in the private area (6,8 vs. 6,16 in public sector; $p=0,001$). The NFR in case of bullying by the manager is higher than when bullying is performed by someone else (7,14 vs. 6,12; $p=0,00$).

When workers get support from their manager (willingness to listen, offering aid and support), in case of mobbing, their NFR is significantly lower (5,59 vs. 7,19; $p=0,00$) The NFR is also significantly lower when they know the confidential advisor (6,46 vs. 6,85; $p=0,03$).

Conclusions and/or implications

This study shows that bullying has a negative effect on the need for recovery. The manager’s role is very important: sufficient support and a listening ear make a significant difference for workers. Knowledge of the confidential advisor also leads to a lower NFR in case of bullying.

Employers' return to work experience of employees with cancer: A complex communicative pathway

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Introduction

Employers play a crucial role in achieving return to work (RTW) for cancer survivors. We aimed to provide insight in Dutch employers' experience and their needs for support in the RTW-process.

Methods

We interviewed thirty employer representatives (medium and large for- and non-profit organizations) to investigate their experience with employees, diagnosed with cancer. For analysis, we used a Grounded Theory approach.

Results

Supporting employers with cancer is experienced as a complex, decision-making, and phased communicative pathway. In addition, employers regard the pathway demanding because of various dilemmas (balancing both the employer's and the employee's interests). We distinguished two types of approaches to support employees with cancer: a business-oriented (based on employers interests) and a care-oriented (based on employee needs) approach. Variation in experiences and approaches related to differences in organizational structure, and employer and employee characteristics. Employers expressed needs for information, communication and decision-making skills to better support cancer survivors.

Conclusions

Dealing with an employee with cancer is demanding and challenging. The existing legislation on RTW did not offer all the support the employer needed. Supporting them by providing information and training their decision-making and communication skills could help the interviewed employers in supporting their employees. Theoretically, an informative tool should be developed.

Commitment of employees in relation to age and the relation with psychosocial risks across age

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Introduction and/or Aim(s)

This study explores the relationship between different psychosocial risks and affective and continuance commitment for different categories of age. First we study the relation between age and commitment: are older employees more committed to the organization compared to their younger colleagues? Secondly, we look if the strengths of the associations of the psycho-social risks with commitment differ across age categories?

Affective and continuance commitment are two facets of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is an important construct in human resource management. Committed employees perform better. They are more motivated to go the extra mile. Different antecedents determine the level of organizational commitment of the employees: relationship with leader, the relationship with colleagues, training opportunities, concerns on part of the organization for the well-being of the employees, opportunities for promotion, work-life balance, salary package, job satisfaction. Age is also a positively related to organizational commitment. These antecedents can be considered as psycho-social risks.

Methods

The Well-being Survey Provikmo (WeS-P) is used as a tool to conduct psycho-social risk analyses. The WeS-P includes mentioned antecedents of commitment. In addition, the WeS-P measures job satisfaction, affective and continuance commitment. Age is included as a demographic variable. This study is conducted on the database containing the results of all risk analyses of 2017 until March 2018. The database contains 11827 respondents, covering a wide range of job sectors (public servants, social profit, construction, factories,...).

Results

Correlations show that the relation between age and affective & continuance commitment is not linear. The affective & continuance commitment seems to decrease until the age of 35 and then increases again. The different psychological risks have an impact within each age category, although the strength of the correlations differs among the age groups. Results, conclusions and implications are discussed in more detail on the poster.

Relationship between commitment and safety awareness

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Introduction

Occupational Health and Safety has known several waves to prevent injuries and worker's drop out. First, mainly technical measures were implemented. In the 1990's management systems introduced organizational measures. More recently, one became aware of the vital role of the individual (who uses the techniques according to the management system). The worker's behaviour (safety awareness) is the missing link between technical and organizational measures. The aim was to explore the relation between commitment and safety awareness.

Methods

17400 employees, working in 128 (private and public) organizations (79.0% participation), filled out a self-completed questionnaire. Group level analyses on company level were performed to explore the relationship between commitment and 4 safety parameters: importance of safety in the organization, presence of clear safety rules, recognition of working practices and knowing whom to turn to. Organizations were divided according to size (<50, 50-99, 100-199, ≥200 employees). 113 organizations were grouped into 10 similar activity groups.

Prevalence rates of the considered safety parameters were calculated by organization size and activity group.

Relationships between commitment and safety parameters were explored within same activity groups by correlation coefficients.

Results

Analyses by company size revealed similar patterns in safety parameters: companies with <50 employees scored best, followed by companies with 100-199 employees, companies with 50-99 employees and worst in companies with ≥200 employees.

Safety parameters scored best in construction and industries, while information and communication companies scored worst.

In three activity groups (police, health care sector and information & communication) strong relationships between commitment and safety parameters were found (R^2 ranging from 0.38 to 0.77).

Discussion

In activity groups where contacts with people who need help are an essential part of the job content, strong associations between commitment and certain safety parameters were found. The current study does not allow to make causal inferences. Further studies in a more larger array of activity groups are needed to elucidate the nature of the found relationships.

Promoting visits prior to return to work: A case study in a Belgian company

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Introduction

Since 2008, Belgian workers on ≥ 4 weeks' sick leave have been allowed to voluntarily visit occupational physicians (OP) before returning to work. In 2015, OPs affiliated with Mensura occupational health services (OHS) performed only 0.73% ($n=2,603$) of these visits. Especially in small companies, visits before returning to work were limited. Often, employers were unaware of the opportunity to visit OPs during sick leave. In a large Belgian company, an initiative to encourage visits before returning to work was introduced with the aim to increase the chances of earlier resumption of work.

Methods

In 2015, a large pharmaceutical company employing >1,000 workers implemented the following procedure:

1. The company informed workers on >6 months' sick leave of the opportunity to voluntarily visit OPs.
2. Workers expected to be on longer sick leave were informed about visits before returning to work and the possibility of (adjusted) work resumption.

Results

In 2015, 9.71% ($n=103$) of the consultations with the OP were visits before returning to work. The most frequent causes of long-term sick leave (documented in 73 of 103 cases) were:

- Orthopedic diagnoses (excluding spine and back pain): 39.7% ($n=29$)
- Psychological causes: 19.2% ($n=14$)
- Spine and back pain: 12.3% ($n=9$)
- Serious/chronic diseases: 6.8% ($n=5$)
- Other: 21.9% ($n=16$)

In the 73 documented cases, 44 workers were eligible to resume work, while for 61% ($n=27$), an early return, which was executed with or without adjustments, was recommended.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated the importance of promoting visits to an OP before returning to work. In the future, OHS could facilitate return to work by supporting companies in implementing sick-leave policy. Contacting workers on sick leave and offering opportunities for visits prior to return to work could create added value for employees and employers.

Investigating Mental Strain of Employees in SMEs

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Introduction and Aim

The intention of workplace health management is to make the working conditions as healthy as possible. As work and working conditions are changing, an appropriate workplace design for different kinds of work and people is recommended.

The aim of this study is to combine two analytic approaches to get a broader impression on the different effects of socio-demographic and work-related variables on workers' work strain.

Methods

Within the framework of the project "RegioKMUnet", funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), psychological risk assessments were conducted through employee surveys in nine SMEs. The questionnaire included different modules, i.e., work organization, mental strain, leadership quality, working with colleagues.

One approach for the analysis was to examine differences in mental strain of groups of employees, divided by gender, age and leading position. The other approach is the investigation of the characteristics of employees who report a higher level of work strain in different questionnaire modules.

Results

The first analyses show that there are differences between the groups separated by gender, age, and leading position. Within the groups of women, people older than 50 years, people with a leading position, several items referring on mental strain caused by work were rated significantly worse than in the remaining groups. The effect size (Cohen's D) of these significant differences was between "no effect" and "small effect" throughout all values.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Differences in work strain by gender, age, and leading position show small effect sizes. Therefore the results do not indicate the need for a special treatment for these groups.

In the next step more variables on job position and working conditions will be included to the dataset. After that the second analysis of employees who report higher job strain will be possible.

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