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Workplace productivity loss

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Abstract

Linking health and productivity to organisational advantages, this study explores the benefits that health screening may provide organisations in South Africa. Health was evaluated in this research as the amount of lifestyle factors (physical inactivity, cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption and BMI) and biometric factors (high blood pressure, high cholesterol and high glucose) employees were at risk for. The study aimed to investigate whether increased health leads to the experience of negative health consequences, which may negatively impact on productivity in the workplace. Productivity was assessed firstly by a person's ability to be at work, and secondly by their ability to significantly contribute to their organisation while they were at work. As such, workplace productivity loss was evaluated in terms of the direct, and indirect, organisational costs that ill-health results in. Workplace productivity loss was measured using the Work Productivity and Activity Impairment Questionnaire: General Health V2.0 (WPAI-GH). Participants were 409 employees from an organisation in the financial service sector (M_{age} = 41.86, SD = 9.3). Multiple regression analysis found one lifestyle factor (physical inactivity) and one biometric factor (cholesterol) to significantly predicted work productivity. Cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, BMI and blood pressure did not significantly predict workplace productivity loss. Significant relationships were found between physical inactivity and BMI, blood pressure and cholesterol. Alcohol consumption was significantly related to cigarette smoking and blood pressure, while BMI and blood pressure had a significant relationship. The findings contribute to knowledge on how workplace productivity can be promoted through healthy lifestyle behaviours and biometric risk factors. Theoretical and practical implications were discussed in terms of how organisations can design, implement and evaluate appropriate workplace programmes that are related to the specific health needs of their employees. This was positioned as an essential

business practice that positively relates to organisational effectiveness by increasing workplace productivity.

Keywords: workplace productivity loss, lifestyle risk factors, biometric risk factors, organisational advantage, South Africa