

Stress and Stress-Related Outcomes Among Employees in the Star Vital Project

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Stress is one of the major mental burdens individuals face wherein external (i.e., environmental) or internal (i.e. rumination) factors threaten an individual's well-being. It occurs when an individual perceives stressors as overly demanding and beyond his/her ability to cope. Chronic stress can lead to harmful physical and emotional outcomes. Given that work and personal life are not separate entities but interconnected and intertwined domains of life, stressors in one domain affect functioning in another domain and vice versa.

Work related stress is experienced as a unique combination of tension, anxiety, fear or discomfort and related psychological disorders resulting from different working conditions that deviate from the optimal ones (e.g. too little or too much work; Lambert & Paoline 2008). Emotional as well as cognitive, behavioral and physiological effects must be considered as the consequences of negative qualities of work and work environment (Quick, Macik-Frey & Nelson 2017).

In this poster we present preliminary survey results regarding stress and stress-related outcomes among workers employed in firms participating in the Star vital project. The project aims at supporting companies in developing safe and healthy workplaces in order to extend the employment of older workers in Slovenia. The project covers four health-related domains, based on the WHO model of healthy workplaces: physical and psychosocial work environment, personal health resources of the worker and cooperation with the social environment.

The survey results are based on an analysis of 834 respondents from 27 different companies in Slovenia. The survey was carried out via both a paper questionnaire and an online survey during the period from June 2019 to February 2020. The results show interesting trends regarding stress and stress-related outcomes. First, general stress and stress-related anxiety tend to be disproportionately reported among workers whose work involves primarily a standing position or who perform mostly demanding physical work. Next, workers who are the least satisfied with internal communication practices are more likely to report stress as one of the biggest workplace burdens. Likewise, workers who report stress as one of the biggest workplace burdens report of higher absenteeism rates for health reasons. Lastly, workers who report stress as one of the biggest workplace burdens are disproportionately eager to retire earlier if given the opportunity.

Our result show that (work-related and general) stress is an important determinant of occupational health and well-being. The findings suggest that company management should regularly monitor the occurrence of stress among workers and develop practices to mitigate factors contributing to work-related stress. In addition, the findings also suggest that company management should pay attention to the workplace climate and perform regular interviews with employees about their well-being and stress-related outcomes.

Keywords: stress, work related stress, Star vital project, older workers, occupational health