

Systematic early detection and prevention of occupational risk factors

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Introduction:

Wellbeing and health status are closely linked to balanced life-domains. It is essential to focus on interventions that detect undiscovered health risks and on interventions to improve impaired health status. We analyzed the features of different occupational environments and how they relate to wellbeing. These findings should serve as reference to detect deviations from ideal/normal patterns and take action before wellbeing is severely affected.

Methods:

In a survey we asked a broad range of working individuals (n=3000+) about their working environment and wellbeing. We grouped these individuals by job positions based on physical strain, work complexity, and hierarchy class. For each group we analyzed the correlations and dependencies of occupational factors and wellbeing, and how the health-related occupational factors form a graphical model.

Results:

We find that the influence of the occupational factors on wellbeing differ significantly between the groups, indicating a different weighting of career as life domain. Also the graphical model differs between the groups: Working individuals in simple positions or early in their careers suffer mostly from low dedication for the position and bad interpersonal relations at the workplace, while individuals with managerial and executive functions suffer increasingly from complicated work structures.

Discussion:

Problematic working conditions that put wellbeing at risk should be tackled as early as possible, as the costs of their effects increase disproportionate to time. This is especially important for individuals with higher weighting of the work-domain and stronger influence on wellbeing. The precise description of the conditional dependence of the occupational factors for different job positions allows a better and earlier detection of adverse conditions, and reaches a working individual with better potential for affirmative action.