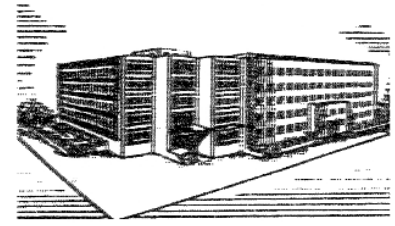


Hungary

Workplace Health Promotion at the National Institute of Occupational Health



National Institute of Occupational Health

Details on the authority

The National Institute of Occupational Health of the Fodor József National Center for Public Health (NCPH-NIOH) is the professional basis institute of occupational health (occupational hygiene and occupational health care), which supports occupational health by professional, methodological guidance, training and education activity, scientific research, in addition to the development of the health policy in the field, and its implementation in practice (e. g. by drafting legal orders). NCPH-NIOH has important and widespread international relations. Its professional guidance tasks are related to the occupational hygiene activity of the National Public Health and Medical Officers Service and the work of the occupational health services.

These tasks are carried out by 118 employees, 81% of whom are women and the average age of the staff is approximately 48.

Background

In Hungary every employer must provide occupational health care service for all the employees, in compliance with the Labour Safety Act and the sectorial decrees. One service (consisting of one physician and one nurse) may cover 1000-2000 workers, depending on the health risks. Occupational health examination serving as basis of risk assessment makes 50 % of the work of the occupational health care service, while the other 50 % is made of the pre-employment, periodic, extraordinary and final fitness for work examinations.

Employees without fitness for work examination may not be employed in Hungary. The occupational health care service knows and maintains good relationship with the management of the institution or enterprise served. This institute has been selected as a good model, because great modernisation has been carried out recently (reorganisation: NCPH, with economic, technical units, central chemical department, division of the departments involved in chemical safety, etc.).

Features of health related measures

■ Taking responsibility for OHS

The Institute provides full scale occupational health care service for the employees. Participation in a pre-employment medical examination is compulsory for everybody, the examinations must be repeated annually. Performing of the examinations is controlled. OHS participates in the tasks related to labour protection. Prior to employment the labour protection officer provides training and its accomplishment is documented.

■ Creating a happy working atmosphere

Within the 8 hour work shift the employees are entitled to a half hour paid lunch time in a civilised canteen at the workplace where they can meet the provision of subsidised food. The choice of menu is developed on a scientific base (OÉTI) and the buffet is regularly controlled by the public health authority. Smoking is prohibited at the workplaces. It is allowed only in designated areas. Alcohol is banned during

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working hours and intoxicated employees may not resume work. In the institute satisfaction of both the employees and that of the customers is examined and found to be good.

Putting the project into practice

The project is under the control of a team consisting of two occupational health and work hygiene specialist physicians and a Ph. D doctor, all familiar with workplace health promotion. The practice of workplace health promotion was studied during the following stepwise procedure:

■ Step 1

Controllers of the project approach the management to obtain approval for the project.

■ Step 2

Personal interview with the employees and preparation of the checklist in the form of a questionnaire.

■ Step 3

Recording of workplace data, performing of risk assessment during onsite workplace inspection, determination of the workplace stress and strain.

■ Step 4

Recording the results of the examination of the employees. The OHS provide data on the health status of the employees. Evaluation of the satisfaction questionnaires.

■ Step 5

Demonstration of the health promotion programme of the NCPH-NIOH.

■ Step 6

Results of the programme.

Systematic needs analyses

■ Risk factors on working environment

Workplaces with computer monitor equipment (ergonomic pathogenic factors):	20 %
Biological pathogenic factors:	25 %
Chemical pathogenic factors:	15 %
Physical pathogenic factors (ionising radiation):	25 %
Increased psychic stress:	15 %

■ Health status of the employees

The health status of the employees was evaluated by the occupational health physician on the basis of a detailed medical examination. The following relevant items of the occupational health evaluation can be stressed.

Smoking habits

■ Smoker:	34 %
■ Non-smoker:	66 %
■ Among these ex-smokers in the last 5 years:	12 %

Drinking habits

■ Regular drinker:	4 %
■ Occasional drinker:	27 %
■ Abstinent:	68 %
■ Ex-drinker:	1 %

Sport

■ Sporting:	21 %
■ Non-sporting:	79 %

Eating habits

■ Up-to-date:	53 %
■ Obsolete:	47 %

Morbidity data

■ Non-classified complaints, symptoms and pathologic clinical and laboratory findings:	6 %
■ Diseases of the circulatory system:	9 %
■ Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases:	4 %
■ Diseases of the bone, muscle and connective tissues:	5 %
■ Diseases of the digestive system:	10 %
■ Diseases of the blood and hemopoietic system and certain disorders of the immune system:	3 %
■ Diseases of the respiratory system:	1 %

Drawing conclusions

Informing, advising and anti-smoking programmes of the occupational health service were conducted. In order to improve the attitude of the employees to sports and exercise, the employer built a tennis court.

Promotion of healthy eating habits – this is assisted by the organisation of action sales of seasonal fruits for the employees at their workplace.

Free vaccination of the employees against flu was provided on a voluntary basis. (50 % of the expenses covered by the health insurance scheme, the other 50 % paid by the employer.)

The following quantitative results are expected if the above programmes are successful:

- the number of overweight employees will decrease
- the number of employees with hypertension will decrease
- the quality of life of the employees will improve
- the work output will increase

The employees were won over to the cause in the following ways:

- The results of the examinations were made known to the management and the employees during workshops.
- The sport facilities were publicised among the management and the employees during workshops (e. g. using the tennis court).
- The results of the examinations were discussed individually with the employees and advice was given on how to improve their state of health.
- Individual employee advice on healthy eating habits.
- Individual employee advice on sport possibilities in their work and dwelling environment.
- Those not involved in sports were convinced that it was better to get to work riding a bicycle or walking rather than driving a car and that it was better to use the stairs than the lift.
- Examples of healthy menus were prepared and suggested for lunch.
- It was recommended that the employees participate in 5 minute mutual physical exercise every hour.

Advice was offered on a continuous basis and not just on one occasion.

Improvement in health and well-being

■ **Employees' satisfaction**
 Employees' satisfaction was evaluated using the questionnaire method. First of all, the ranking by the employees of listed values was studied, i.e. such as money, health, carrier, family, healthy lifestyle, well paid job, friends, good colleagues. Health was ranked first by the employees, followed by family, money, well paid job, healthy lifestyle, carrier, with friends and good colleagues coming at the bottom of the list.

It is worth mentioning how the employees evaluated the health promotion activity of the employers on a questionnaire. The question was: What degree of importance do the employees attach to the efforts of their employers to keep the workers healthy? The answers were: very important (20%), important (15%), slightly important (45%), not important (20%).

Answers to the question: Is there anything in your workplace that need improvement?

The working conditions to be improved	Frequency mentioned
Poor lighting	18,0%
Lack of ventilation, bad air	36,7%
Extreme temperature	35,5%
Bad quality of used material and equipment	26,3%
The state of changing rooms and bathing facilities	21,6%
Presence of material harmful to health	24,4%
Noise	34,0%
Poor or lacking occupational health care	10,3%
Arrangement of working places, little space	26,4%
Permanent risk of accident	11,6%