



Catalogue of Questions and Answers

A. WHAT IS WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION (WHP)?.....	2
A1. Promoting Health at Work.....	2
A2. Benefits and Effects of WHP	4
B. WHP IN EUROPE	6
B1. Status quo, needs and challenges	6
B2. The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion ENWHP	8
B3. The European Union and WHP.....	11

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A. What is Workplace Health Promotion (WHP)?

A1. Promoting Health at Work

What exactly is WHP?

WHP is a approach for improving health at the workplace and is based on the concerted action of employers, employees and society. WHP combines improving work organisation and the working environment, the promotion of active participation of all those involved and supporting staff development.

Why promote health at the workplace?

The workplace is highly relevant for people's health. Time pressure and the flood of information or job cuts are in some cases having considerable effects on employees' health and even their mental well-being. At the workplace where people spend a large proportion of their lives, it is possible to prevent illnesses. It is also a place where employees can acquire the knowledge and incentive to adopt healthy behaviour even outside the working environment. However, promoting health in a company is not only beneficial to the employees, it also reduces the costs related to sickness and increases company productivity and national economic competitiveness as a whole. WHP is therefore in the interest of individuals, companies and society as a whole.

Can the costs for work-related diseases be quantified?

According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in Bilbao estimates from Member States of all work-related diseases range from 2.6% to 3.8% of GNP. 600 million working days are lost due to work-related diseases in Europe (EU-15) every year.

Which are the areas of activity involved?

The areas of activity for WHP include life-styles, ageing, corporate culture including staff leadership, staff development, work life balance, wellness, nutrition and health.

What is the role of WHP for improving public health?

WHP is one public health approach to improve the level of health protection by addressing specific settings. WHP includes strategies and measures focussing on individual behaviours such as smoking, alcohol, stress management and mental health but also on the working environment including management practices and corporate culture. By promoting health at work, health potentials and well-being of employees, their families and the communities in which they live in, can be strengthened. This contributes to a higher health protection in Europe.



What other factors does WHP tackle?

Among the other factors considered here to be successful for improving employees' health are corporate principles and guidelines, a corporate culture geared to staff participation, work organisation based on participation and compatible with the employees qualifications, a human resources policy which pursues active health promotion objectives as well as an integrated occupational safety and health system.

Since when does WHP exist?

WHP has evolved into an independent discipline over the last 20 years. The new approach to WHP has developed following the realignment of traditional occupational safety and health based on the new understanding of health defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1986 (Ottawa Charter). Health was no longer understood in the negative sense as the absence of illness but as a positive interaction of physical, mental and social well-being.

What is the difference between WHP and traditional occupational safety and health?

Whereas occupational safety and health determines the risks to safety and health at the workplace on the basis of risk analyses and aims to reduce them (risk factor orientation), WHP applies in addition the already existing resources for health and safety (resource-oriented). WHP is therefore to be seen as complementary to traditional occupational safety and health.

What significance does WHP have in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?

At present, still very little. SMEs have less time and resources available to promote their employees' well-being and health. Time lost due to illness for example has a much greater impact in these companies. Economic success in future will depend even more on healthy employees. WHP will therefore assume a key role in SMEs, where the majority of employees in Europe work.

How can SMEs be more strongly convinced by WHP?

In addition to the opinion and decision makers in the companies it will be important for external multipliers to play a key role in this process. This includes those organisations which already support SMEs in other activities such as for example, the chambers of industry and commerce, social insurance organisations, labour and management associations etc.

How can WHP support the reform process in the public administration sector?

The debates on reform in the public sector are centred on the need for more public-friendliness and service orientation, for cost reductions and improved public services. Particularly in public administrations which exist mainly to provide services, WHP can help enormously in motivating employees, providing better services and in cutting costs appreciably.



A2. Benefits and Effects of WHP

To what extent is WHP profitable for companies?

Companies benefit from WHP because their employees are healthier and better motivated when working in an improved working environment. The consequence is a reduction in sickness-related and other health costs, a higher quality of products and services, more innovation and a rise in productivity. WHP is also a prestige factor which helps to improve the public image of a company and makes it become more attractive as an employer.

Can the cost savings for companies be quantified?

The scale of the cost savings of course always depends on the situation of the individual company and the nature and range of the health programmes. One example: A 1% rise in the health rate at Volkswagen AG led to a corresponding increase in productivity costs of 1%. This represents savings amounting to €45 million. By implementing health promotion measures, the company has increased the health rate by 4.3 % between 1988 and 1999 achieving savings in personnel costs of over €190 million.

How does WHP affect absenteeism in companies?

A number of scientific studies has shown that reductions in absences from work among participants of WHP programmes rose 12% to 36%. Every US-Dollar invested in WHP resulted in a Return on Investment (ROI) between \$ 2,5 and \$ 4,8 due to the reduction in absenteeism costs. Glaxo's health promotion programme cut medical absence by 20.000 workdays between 1996 and 2003.

Is there evidence that WHP tackles personal lifestyles and behaviours effectively?

Research shows that WHP can positively influence lifestyles. For instance: Between 10% and 15% of participants in smoking cessation programmes succeeded in giving up smoking. 26% of participants in programmes on weight control were able to maintain their weight 12 months after the programme had finished.

What are national economic benefits of WHP?

Due to work incapacity alone, the European national economies incur annual costs of three-figure billions, not including costs for overtime and loss of production. Systematic health management in companies helps to reduce the financial expenses without value added and relieve the statutory social security systems (health, pension and accident insurance funds). Moreover, healthy, qualified and motivated employees increase companies' innovative power and their productivity, thus improving national economic competitiveness.



What importance is attached to WHP in the discussion about the future of the statutory pension insurance system?

While proposals for prolonging working life are under discussion, the reality is that an increasing number of employees are leaving work earlier for health reasons. The ageing of the workforce brought about by the demographic change is one of the major challenges facing the future world of work. If employees are to work longer, they must also have the opportunity to do so. Companies must therefore be prepared to invest more in the health of their employees.

How can WHP contribute in stabilising the statutory health insurance system?

Healthy working conditions improve the health of the population as a whole. The reduction in people using medical and rehabilitative services leads to savings in public health service expenditure. Companies incur lower costs for supplementary wages for sick employees (e.g. continuation of wage payment during sickness), which reduce non-wage labour costs and the contributions to the statutory health insurance funds.



B. WHP in Europe

B1. Status quo, needs and challenges

Is WHP understood in the same way throughout Europe or are there different interpretations?

The Luxembourg Declaration presented by the ENWHP in 1997 succeeded for the first time in developing a common understanding of WHP throughout Europe. According to the Declaration, WHP comprises *"all joint action of employers, employees and society to improve health and well-being at the workplace. This may be achieved through a combination of approaches: improving the work organisation and working environment, promoting active employee participation, strengthening personal development"*.

What distinguishes WHP in Europe from other regions of the world, the USA for example?

In the USA WHP is primarily geared to "lifestyle", i.e. a health-promoting lifestyle. Relevant programmes frequently only reach those who are already very health conscious, whereas in Europe WHP has a more comprehensive function: the employee is regarded as a success factor and WHP focuses on both individual health behaviour as well as on the healthy organisation of the working conditions.

How widespread is WHP in Europe?

The degree of dissemination varies greatly in Europe. It is higher in northern and central Europe than in the southern and eastern regions. Unfortunately, there are no comparable surveys for all countries. Reliable studies exist only in individual countries such as Germany and the Netherlands for example where WHP activities have been implemented at least once in roughly 10 % to 20 % of all companies. The proportion of good quality, systematic WHP projects is however probably much lower.

In which country is WHP most widespread?

In Finland. The proportion of companies there that have implemented or are implementing WHP programmes is roughly 80 %.

How widespread is WHP in other parts of the world?

Europe is lacking far behind the US, where over 80% of the large and medium-sized companies are running relevant programs. The reason for this is that in the USA, employers carry a large share of the burden for financing health costs, so the awareness for unhealthy workplaces is higher there. Canada is also a pioneer in health promotion at workplaces.



What is being done to disseminate WHP more widely in the Southern Europe countries?

The work carried out up to now by the ENWHP has shown that the scientific models of WHP are largely influenced by the socio-cultural background of Northern and Central European countries. They cannot therefore be simply applied to the rest of Europe. The Network thoroughly examined this problem and produced relevant recommendations in the so-called "Sicily Decalogue", which include suggestions for improvements in the co-operation between interested groups, the provision of specific tools and the development of intervention programmes geared to the needs and legal conditions prevailing in these countries. Organisations from the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary have already joined the Network ENWHP; Latvia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Slovakia and Estonia followed. Identifying the specific needs concerning workplace health in the Eastern European and Candidate Countries and to develop corresponding structures for further dissemination was a subject of the various ENWHP projects. Organisations from the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary have been involved in collecting Models of Good Practice and establishing national structures (national networks). A European work-related health report was produced. It emphasised the importance of disseminating workplace health promotion in the new member states and the accession countries of the European Union.

What role does the personal behaviour of the individual employee play in the European understanding?

According to the European understanding, WHP is based on a corporate health management system which combines individual measures, i.e. behaviour prevention and technical/organisational/cultural changes (circumstantial prevention) in the company.

Are there binding regulations in all EU states?

Occupational safety and health principles binding for all EU states were created for the first time in 1989 in the Framework Directive 89/391/EEC while at the same time a new holistic approach was formulated: The focus of preventive occupational safety and health policy was no longer on individual risk factors but on the inherent risks, stress and strain factors as a whole. The stipulations in the EU Framework Directive have been transferred into national law in the member states.

Are binding legal regulations needed?

According to the Luxembourg Declaration of 1997, the maxim should be: "Conviction rather than normative pressure". According to this generally accepted European declaration, one of the most decisive preconditions for successful WHP is voluntarily participation. Thus, legal force is not necessary.



Why is WHP so important for European companies?

Efficient use and sustained care of human capital is a prerequisite for economic success in knowledge-based economies such as those in Europe. Europe's companies can only achieve economic success in the long term if they are faster, more flexible, more able to learn and more innovative than their rivals in other parts of the world.

What is being done to broaden the dissemination of WHP in Europe in the future

In order to broaden the implementation of WHP, the ENWHP has initiated and developed networks and forums for WHP in the EU Member States, the EEA countries, Switzerland and candidate countries. These networks or national forums involve both institutional stakeholders (governments / social security stakeholders / social partners) and direct users (private sector companies, public administrations, hospitals, schools and institutions of the labour markets). Moreover, to push ahead changes in attitude, convincing answers on questions of substance are essential: Why should enterprises (and national social security organisations) invest in WHP? And furthermore, how should this take place? During the project and parallel to the forum initiative, the ENWHP has therefore developed both a European pool of arguments that justify initiatives for WHP, and a collection of instruments that have successfully been employed.

B2. The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion ENWHP

What is the ENWHP?

The ENWHP is an informal network of national occupational safety and health organisations and players in the field of public health in the EU member and accession countries and the countries of the European Economic Area. All the members are appointed by their national ministries or responsible ministerial authorities and they represent the Network at national level as national contact offices. The Network is co-ordinated in Germany by the Federal Association of Company Health Insurance Funds (BKK).

How was the ENWHP formed?

The ENWHP was established in 1996 under the initiative of the "Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health" (BAuA) in Germany. At that time the Network was one of several initiatives created under the former EU programme of action "Health Promotion, Information, Education and Training", aimed to raise the health level of the population in the Community.



What are the aims pursued by the Network?

The vision set out by the Network is "Healthy employees in healthy organisations". In concrete terms, the Network pursues the goal of disseminating WHP and giving health a greater significance at the workplace.

What are the tasks entailed in this objective?

The activities carried out by the Network aim to bring WHP to the attention of decision-makers, to identify and disseminate models of good practice, to develop guidelines for effective WHP, to provide successful methods and tools, to encourage the member states to take appropriate political action and in particular to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in matters of health. Currently, the principal priority of the network is to establish supportive infrastructures at national level involving all relevant stakeholders, thus creating a lasting basis for the dissemination and incorporation of WHP.

What has the Network achieved so far?

The Network managed for the first time to develop a common European understanding of WHP which was defined in the Luxembourg Declaration. In the years that followed, the Network completed three projects defining quality criteria and documenting European models of good practice, i.e. successful individual projects for large companies, small and medium-sized enterprises and organisations in the public administration sector. In addition, joint political recommendations for the design of WHP were worked out, published and disseminated. National WHP Structures (national networks and forums) have been developed, a truly European inventory of useful methods of tools has been created and arguments collected, which justify investments in WHP. And to conclude, the Network is now established as *the* forum for the exchange of experience in WHP throughout Europe. The network's 5th initiative on "Healthy Work in an Ageing Europe" was devoted to developing and disseminating WHP strategies and activities to enable employees to remain longer at work. As a result of the project, a European health report was produced on the ageing population and employment groups as well as national status reports on methods for Workplace Health Promotion for older workers. In the course of the 6th joint initiative two separate network projects were carried out. They aimed to identify specific requirements and challenges concerning WHP in the Eastern European and Candidate Countries and to develop national infrastructures for the dissemination of "Good Practice" in the accession states. A third project on "Workplace Health Promotion in an Enlarging Europe" sought to develop best-practice methodologies for the promotion and maintenance of work ability. To help promote healthy lifestyles, the ENWHP initiated as part of its 7th initiative a European campaign focussing on four topics: physical activity, smoking prevention, healthy diet, mental health. Joining the campaign as a Move Europe partner more than 3.000 small, medium and large enterprises, public administrations, schools and hospitals took part, companies beginning and companies with more experience in WHP.



What is the network working on at present?

Mental health disorders are becoming a major problem in European countries:

- Almost one in four people in the EU are affected by a mental disorder at some point in his or her lifetime and
- the medical care is inadequate.

Using the slogan “work. in tune with life. move europe” the ENWHP will address the growing problem of mental illness and continue the campaign “Move Europe” by focussing on this issue. This 8th ENWHP initiative aims to sensitise employers and employees to strategies and programmes to help promote mental health at the workplace. As in the previous campaign, this will be carried out by identifying and publicising good practice in companies and administrations and producing guidelines for management and other participants.

What benefits does the Network bring to companies that want to become more involved in WHP?

In addition to "Quality criteria for WHP", the ENWHP has also developed a "Questionnaire for self-assessment for companies". They both provide tools for companies to assist them in their self-assessment and in improving their health-promoting projects. The documented models of good practice provide companies with experience and knowledge on how WHP programmes can be successfully implemented to suit their national and structural requirements. The national contact offices (NCO) in the individual countries can also be contacted by the companies for further assistance or information. In many countries companies can now join national networks, and finally they can make use of the inventory of methods (Toolbox) and the collection of arguments (Business Case) which both help them to implement WHP in their organisations.

How can companies obtain information about the work of the Network and on WHP?

Companies can either contact their national contact office, or the secretariat in Essen. Interested companies can also find more detailed information, material and links on the subject of WHP and the Network on the Internet at www.enwhp.org.

What are the quality criteria for WHP developed by the Network?

The quality criteria developed by the Network are based on the *European Foundation for Quality Management* model supporting the integration of health promotion into the company's quality management system. The quality criteria encompass corporate policy, the human resources department and work organisation, social responsibility, the planning and implementation of WHP and its evaluation.

Why is the Network secretariat located at the German Federal Association of Company Health Insurance Funds (BKK Bundesverband)?



The BKK Bundesverband has been developing concepts, procedures and tools for WHP with various co-operation partners over a long period of time and is also the Collaborating Centre of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Since the Network was first established, the BKK has not only been the German national contact office but also the contracting partner with the Commission in financing the joint ENWHP initiatives.

What differentiates the Network from comparable initiatives?

In contrast to other initiatives, the ENWHP is an interdisciplinary, cross-section network which is not restricted to working on individual diseases or with specific organisations, such as schools or hospitals. The ENWHP deals with all health-relevant factors which can be influenced at and by the workplace.

B3. The European Union and WHP

Why does the European Union support WHP, given that the individual states are responsible for health policy?

With the Treaty of Amsterdam, the European Union re-organised the competencies in the field of health policy while at the same time committing itself to achieving a high level of health protection in the population and to eliminate the causes of health hazards. Whereas according to Article 152, activities in the field of public health should take the primary health responsibilities of the individual member states into consideration, the measures taken by the Community can enhance these activities, especially concerning problems that are relevant to several member states. They include the protection and improvement of health at the workplace.

Why does the European Union support the Network?

The European Union supports the view taken by the ENWHP that healthy, motivated and well-qualified employees are crucial to the future success of the EU in both social and economic respects. In 1996, the Commission passed a Community framework of action in the field of public health, based on the Treaty of Amsterdam. The ENWHP took part in a corresponding action programme for the implementation in the fields of health promotion, information, education and training. In the current action programme, which started at the beginning of 2003, "Health at the workplace" is also named explicitly as one of the areas where the EU is involved in securing a high level of safety and health.

What is the importance of the EU action programme for WHP?

The current community action programme highlights the importance of health for the citizens of Europe. To ensure a high level of health protection, strategies and campaigns in relevant areas will be supported in this programme which is to run from 2003 to 2008. Safety and health at the workplace is



explicitly included as a setting. The last of the three strands of action which the Commission has identified to tackle major health problems addresses fundamental causes of ill health such as personal lifestyles and social, environmental and economic factors.

How does the creation of national networks fit into the strategy of the Community strategy?

The creation of national forums (of which ENWHP has been the initiator and driver) helps to exchange ideas and experiences, to reveal exemplary models of good practice, to encourage their use and to stimulate mutual learning. The benchmarking-approach has been explicitly named as a major pillar of the Commission in the its action programme.

How can WHP support public health goals of the European Commission?

WHP helps to tackle lifestyles and social and economic factors which are underlying health. At workplaces large social groups can be reached. They are a place where employees can adopt healthy lifestyles, thus influencing their own behaviour and that of their families and ultimately their communities. WHP can also help to tackle social inequalities, as it provides access to underprivileged groups and helps them to acquire the knowledge and motivation to influence their own health and that of their environment. Furthermore, WHP can help to increase the European knowledge on risk factors and support the Commission's strategy to integrate health in other policy fields. As healthy employees are a prerequisite for competitiveness, sustainability and innovation, WHP can contribute to achieving other goals set out e.g. in the Lisbon Agenda.