



Title	Effectiveness of Organizational Interventions for the Prevention of Occupational Stress
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Reference	January 2009 (English). ISBN 978-1-897443-50-7 (print), ISSN 978-1-897443-51-4 (online). www.ihe.ca/publications/library

Aim

To determine which organizational-level interventions are effective in reducing stress, psychological symptoms, absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover among psychologically healthy employees.

Conclusions and results

Six systematic reviews (SRs) met the inclusion criteria. The studies in the SRs varied widely, eg, classification of interventions, types of strategies employed, and tools used to measure outcomes.

- *Stress*: Two interventions reported in 2 good-quality studies significantly reduced employee stress.
- *Burnout*: Five interventions produced significant reductions in employee burnout, but only 2 of the studies were of good methodological quality.
- *Psychological wellbeing*: Seven interventions significantly improved psychological wellbeing, but only 4 of the studies were of good quality.
- *Sickness absence and absenteeism*: Three interventions produced a statistically significant reduction in absenteeism.
- *Turnover*: One intervention produced a statistically significant reduction in employee turnover.

Recommendations

There is limited evidence that organizational interventions reduce stress, psychological symptoms, or worker absenteeism, compared with other interventions or no intervention. Participation and autonomy, job redesign or restructuring, and training and education programs were most effective, but this may reflect the overrepresentation of these strategies in the literature. Employee turnover decreased when organizational interventions were implemented, but the statistical significance of the change was generally not reported. Studies have yet to include measures of presenteeism as an outcome measure. The effectiveness of one intervention relative to another could not be determined given the current evidence.

Methods

All relevant full-text SRs, published in English, were identified by systematically searching the Cochrane Library, PubMed, the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination databases (HTA, DARE), PsycINFO, EMBASE, CINAHL, ABI Inform, Econ Lit, the Web of Science, Business Source Complete, the University of Alberta library catalogue, government websites, health technology assessment agency websites, and Google from Jan 1997 to June 2008. Using 2 quality appraisal tools, 2 reviewers independently assessed the methodological quality of the included SRs.

Further research/reviews required

More rigorous evaluations of stress prevention interventions, with longer follow-up, need to answer:

- What is the link between stress and absenteeism, and between workplace stress and physical and psychological illness?
- What is a clinically significant outcome?
- What effects do new sources of stress, eg, Internet and cell phones, have on the psychological and physical health of employees?
- Which strategies work for which employees and under what circumstances? Are comprehensive programs more effective than organizational or individual interventions alone?