

CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SUSTAINABLE MSD PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACES, A STUDY CASES OF 30 FRENCH COMPANIES

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Aims:

The number of MSDs increased steadily since the 1990's. Numerous interventions in workplaces, studies and symposia brought together researchers and professionals. Their intervention strategy became clearer. Companies succeed in reducing complaints and improving production, but occupational diseases and productive disorders return after thereabouts two years. This raises questions about conditions of a sustainable MSD prevention [1].

Three research teams and ANACT network conducted between 2004 and 2007 an intervention research, supported by the French Ministry in charge of labour, concerning obstacles and driving forces to implement a sustainable prevention in companies. This study provided a better understanding of practices and proposes recommendations applied to the system of prevention [2].

Methods:

First, consultants led retrospective analysis in thirty industrial and service companies, on the basis of a common reference. Secondly, they accompanied eighteen volunteers in their MSD project. Their intervention strategy was recounted in a logbook and by interview. The overall analysis is based on comparison of monographs drafted on these two steps.

Results:

Companies are adjusting occasional and local over time, when workers suffer from MSD, without capitalize on their actions. A more proactive, collective and comprehensive approach is still rare. This trend is related to corporate governance, project management, production organization, HRM and workers' knowledge recognition.

- A stable leadership is an asset unlike high turnover or limited autonomy
- A collective dynamics based on common references and outside opening (club, external counselling) allow a steady project. Weak internal resources, a non-shared and restrictive MSD pattern and a low involvement of staff representative bodies undermine it
- The prevention efforts are most effective by improving organization, but most companies are facing dislocated organizations constantly producing MSD
- Very few companies take into account occupational health indicators and workers' complaints, which reveal hardness and malfunctions. This requires tools for data collection and good relations between Human Resources and occupational health. Denying workers' difficulties is an aggravating factor of MSD. Workers need manoeuvring margins to develop a professional act, namely adapting their gestures to contexts and events production. Discuss ways and means is a promising prevention resource.

Conclusion:

This study offers recommendations on accompanying forms and necessary conditions to sustain companies' involvement over time: Extend managers' awareness through training on TMS and prevention project management; Support a mode of corporate governance in order to influence the work systems design; Strengthen prospective HRM, training and transmission of professional gesture...

Keywords: Work organization, Intervention studies, Public policy.

References:

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