Health Status Within the Workplace

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Health Status Within the Workplace

Kristina Bonham & Brooke Tomlin
Phi Kappa Phi Research Symposium
April 9, 2014
Documentation states that as the number of hours worked steadily increases, the level of sedentary nature or low physical activity of the employment role also increases, as does the likelihood of having an inadequate diet (FCDP, 2010).

Missed preventive care is a particular problem for workers (Harris et al., 2009). Adults now spend approximately one third of their waking hours at work.

Associated with this trend is the alarming growth rate of chronic disease in the community such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and issues relating to mental health (FCDP, 2010).

To avoid the resulting financial insecurity that missing work causes, many workers decide to go to work when ill (Baker-White, 2013). Going to work when sick is known as “presenteeism” and can lead to reduced productivity, negatively impact worker safety, and cost the employer more than if the employee stayed home (Baker-White, 2013).

Presenteeism is defined in terms of lost productivity that occurs when employees come to work ill and perform below par because of that illness (Cooper et al., 2008).

Almost 80% of workers have at least one chronic condition while 55% of workers have more than one chronic condition; and when asked, employers list chronic conditions as the biggest reason for presenteeism (Almanac of Chronic Disease, 2009).
The purpose of this study was to assess health status in the workplace.

Sub-Purposes:

- To investigate if age, gender and race had an affect on health status in the workplace.
- To inspect the element of employment type and length on health habits.
- To determine if workers had been diagnosed with a major illness.
- To explore whether being diagnosed with an illness impacted work.
- To assess fear of losing employment or loss of hours if employer found out about the illness.
The research method for the study was quantitative, descriptive, non-experimental, one-shot study (n=50).

Sampling methodology conducted in this research was non-probability, sample of convenience.

The target population for this research was rural Southeast Georgia employees aged 18 years and older.

Data collection was conducted from various transportation, food service, maintenance, and school faculty workers.
Instrumentation

- The instrument of this study consisted of 19 questions measuring the health behaviors of a variety of employees, and assessing fear.
  - Questions 1-15 had answers ranging from “None of the Time” to “All of the Time”
  - Questions 16-19 had answers ranging from “Yes”, “No”, and “Don’t Know”
- Demographics were: gender, age, race, employment type, and length of employment at current job.
- The survey took 5-10 minutes to complete.
- All participants were voluntary.
- Validity: Consensual content validity.
- Reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha= 0.68.
The purpose of this study is to assess health status in the workplace. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. Completion of this self-report should take 5-10 minutes. Reply to these study questions will be considered permission to use your responses in the study. Responses from the collected data are anonymous and will be reported in aggregated totals only. If there are any questions concerning this study please contact Dr. Helen Bland (912-478-5137) or lbland@georgiasouthern.edu at Georgia Southern University.

How often have you done each of the following in the past 4 weeks?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>A little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>A good bit of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cut down on stress in your life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Used relaxation techniques (biofeedback, self-hypnosis, yoga, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exercised regularly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tried to socialize more with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Took prescribed medication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Took part in a cardiac rehabilitation program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cut down on the alcohol you drank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Stopped or cut down on smoking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Checked your blood for sugar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Checked your feet for minor bruises, injuries, and ingrown toenails</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Carried something with sugar in it (a source of glucose) for emergencies when outside your home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Carried medical supplies needed for your self-care when outside your home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Followed a low salt diet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Followed a low fat or weight-loss diet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Followed a diabetic diet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please read the following questions and circle a response that is accurate for you.

1. Have you ever been diagnosed with a major illness? Yes No Don't know
2. Has being diagnosed with an illness ever impacted your work? Yes No Don't know
3. Would you be afraid of losing your job if your employer found out you were diagnosed with a medical illness? Yes No Don't know
4. Would you be afraid of losing hours of work because of an illness? Yes No Don't know

Please fill in the blank with your age and put an “X” beside the response that applies to you.

Age: _____ years

Gender: Female_____ Race: White_____ Employment Type: Transportation_____ Male_____ Black_____ Food Service_____ Other_____ Maintenance_____ Faculty/Staff_____ Length of employment at current job: Less than 1 year _____ Between 1 and 5 years _____ 5+ years _____

Thank you for your participation.

PLEASE TURN PAGE OVER
Results
### Table 1. Participant profile of subjects reported by frequency and percentile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
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<tr>
<td>22-32</td>
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<td>32+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31.5</td>
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<td><strong>Gender (n=49)</strong></td>
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<td>69.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>30.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>43.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.1</td>
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<td><strong>Employment Type (n=49)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
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<td>20.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
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<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
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<td>55.1</td>
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<td>32.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between 1-5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>5+ years</td>
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<td>28.6</td>
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<td><strong>Diagnosed Major Illness (n=47)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnosis Impact Work (n=47)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
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<td><strong>Fear Loss Employment (n=47)</strong></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>76.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
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<td><strong>Fear Loss Hours (n=47)</strong></td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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</table>
Table 2. Descriptive analysis of participant’s responses as reported by frequencies and percentiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>A little of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>A good bit of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cut down on stress in your life</td>
<td>9 (18.0)</td>
<td>9 (18.0)</td>
<td>22 (44.0)</td>
<td>7 (14.0)</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Used relaxation techniques (biofeedback, self-hypnosis, yoga, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exercised regularly</td>
<td>30 (60.0)</td>
<td>10 (20.0)</td>
<td>5 (10.0)</td>
<td>3 (6.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tried to socialize more with others</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>3 (6.0)</td>
<td>10 (20.0)</td>
<td>17 (34.0)</td>
<td>10 (20.0)</td>
<td>6 (12.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Took prescribed medication</td>
<td>27 (55.1)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
<td>4 (8.2)</td>
<td>4 (8.2)</td>
<td>3 (6.1)</td>
<td>10 (20.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Took part in a cardiac rehabilitation program</td>
<td>45 (90.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
<td>6 (12.2)</td>
<td>3 (6.1)</td>
<td>10 (20.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cut down on the alcohol that you drank</td>
<td>22 (44.9)</td>
<td>8 (16.3)</td>
<td>6 (12.2)</td>
<td>3 (6.1)</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Stopped or cut down on smoking</td>
<td>25 (52.1)</td>
<td>4 (8.3)</td>
<td>3 (6.3)</td>
<td>2 (4.2)</td>
<td>2 (4.2)</td>
<td>12 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Checked your blood from sugar</td>
<td>38 (76.0)</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Checked your feet for minor bruises, injuries, and ingrown toenails</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Carried something with sugar in it (a source of glucose) for emergencies when outside your home</td>
<td>23 (46.0)</td>
<td>9 (18.0)</td>
<td>5 (10.0)</td>
<td>7 (14.0)</td>
<td>5 (10.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Carried medical supplies needed for your self-care when outside your home</td>
<td>39 (78.0)</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>4 (8.0)</td>
<td>1 (2.0)</td>
<td>2 (4.0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Followed a low salt diet</td>
<td>37 (75.5)</td>
<td>4 (8.2)</td>
<td>4 (8.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (8.2)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Followed a low-fat or weight loss diet</td>
<td>30 (60.0)</td>
<td>6 (12.0)</td>
<td>6 (12.0)</td>
<td>3 (6.0)</td>
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<td>3 (6.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Followed a diabetic diet</td>
<td>17 (34.7)</td>
<td>12 (24.5)</td>
<td>9 (18.4)</td>
<td>3 (6.1)</td>
<td>5 (10.2)</td>
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</table>
Table 4. Report of overall means of behavior on the health status in the workplace by demographic determinant groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variable</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.563</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.250</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22-32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.733</td>
<td>1.91104</td>
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<td>32+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37.3529</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>0.951</td>
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<td>33.3333</td>
<td>3.00898</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>32.6194</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21</td>
<td>33.5714</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>33.1875</td>
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<td>31.0909</td>
<td>2.17613</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>1.95213</td>
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<td>Between 1-5 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30.1053</td>
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<td>5+ years</td>
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<td>38.5000</td>
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<td>35.5238</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.8000</td>
<td>8.50000</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*p<0.05*  
Scoring:  
47-60 Excellent Health Habits  
34-46 Good Health Habits  
19-33 Fair Health Habits  
5-18 Poor Health Habits
Conclusion & Recommendations
We conducted our research showing that length of employment significantly impacts one’s health habits ($p=0.033$).
Being diagnosed with a major illness was also a significant factor in predicting one’s health habits ($p=0.010$) along with the diagnosis of a major illness impacting work ($p=0.013$).
Both of these factors positively impacted their health habits.
Faculty/staff showed greater health habits than the other occupations, and those who have been employed longer than five years among any occupation showed greater health habits.
The workplace, along with the school, hospital, city, island, and marketplace, has been established as one of the priority settings for health promotion into the 21st century (WHO, n.d.).

Worksites should strive to incorporate wellness programs and outlets for physical activity among their employees. Faculty/staff had the greatest health habits that is believed to have to do with greater job security.

Workers should be given incentives to stay healthy by exercising, refraining from tobacco use, and having regular doctor visits; as opposed to fearing loss of employment or hours due to an illness.

Discounts could be given to employees at local gyms, or exercise rooms could be set up in the workplace.

To reward healthy behaviors a discounted family health plan could be offered.
References

Thank You!

- Any Questions??
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Research Symposium
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