

thesis in form of a scientific paper. Throughout the process, they are accompanied by a tutor.

Results Since its beginning in 2012, the number of participants in the program is stable with 10–12 students/year. All of them are OSH experts with at least 2 years of experience in the field coming from eight Latin American countries. Students evaluate the project-based learning approach as positive. Of the 43 graduating students, 9 research papers were published in journals. More than half of the graduates teach students at local universities and thereby act as multipliers. Few continue to carry out research mainly due to lack of priority in their home countries.

Discussion The project-based learning approach contributes to occupational health research in Latin America. The concept might be promising also for other LMIC. However, due to the individual tutoring the program is cost intensive, publication of the results challenging and work opportunities for researchers limited.

1467 FINANCIAL IMPACT OF MEDICAL TESTS REDUCTION FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF A COMPANY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

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Introduction Due to the severe crisis that Brazil is facing in recent years, companies have been forced to implement cost control programs trying to mitigate impact of economic recession.

Knowing that the Occupational Health Department is responsible for raising company costs due to large number of medical tests regularly requested, one way to cut down expenditures would be to revise pre-established internal protocols that vary according to job characteristics of the company.

This study shows the financial impact when removing unnecessary complementary medical tests from Tejofran's internal protocols, an outsourcing services company in Brazil, without interfering in the worker's health.

Methods Reviews were made to the company's internal protocols and, based on the medical literature, complementary tests which are not required by law and do not influence in the worker's health, were excluded. Some protocols could not be revised due to request of partner companies. The amount spent in 2016 was compared with the expenditures after the changes in 2017, considering the same costs of tests from previous years for the same group of workers to estimate the obtained savings.

Results 5029 exams were excluded, the main ones: Audiometry (32%), Electrocardiogram (14%), Electroencephalogram (14%) and Blood Sugar (14%). A reduction of R\$ 106.050,36 (58,6%) from total value incurred, comparing to previous year. This amount saved could be invested in other action plans that benefit workers like physical workplace exercise, awareness campaigns and trainings.

Conclusion This study shows that it is possible to reduce expenditures with company's Occupational Health Department without having to reduce benefits for employees and without harming the health of workers, and the department's main objective. The amount saved can be invested in action

programs aiming improvement of life quality for employees and reducing rates of work accidents, absenteeism, and fatalities, therefore reducing costs for the company.

1474 PRACTICES IN THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY FOR ASSESSMENTS, INTERVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Introduction There are a number of psychosocial issues prevalent in the rail industry that influence workers' health and wellbeing. Managing psychosocial risks is a legal imperative that obliges employers to establish processes in accordance with national legislation to match task and environments to the physical and psychological capabilities of people to safeguard their health and wellbeing. Globalisation, higher workload and more pressure, increased job insecurity as well as poor work life balance contribute to these psychosocial issues. **Methods** An analysis of questionnaire responses from Occupational health practitioners working in the railway industry, to describe types of assessments, various interventions and management of workers with psychosocial issues were conducted. Consideration were given to reason for consultation, follow-ups, and referrals to secondary psychological interventions where indicated.

Result The results revealed that we are lacking information that could provide insight into the magnitude of the problem that can influence policies and practices in the workplace. Effective solutions is needed for the prevention of psychosocial risks as these offer good returns in improved efficiency and productivity, better health, reduced absenteeism and lower medical costs.

Discussion It is widely acknowledged that work and life related stress is very common and has a high cost in terms of workers health, absenteeism and lower performance in the workplace. The development of effective guidelines, processes and policies is important to assist occupational health practitioners in assisting workers to get expert advice and referral at point of service to deal with psychosocial issues.

Conclusion A comprehensive approach by practitioners and new patterns of prevention is necessary to face current psychosocial issues in the workplace. It proved repeatedly that effective solutions should exist for the prevention of psychosocial issues as this offer good return in terms of reduced absenteeism, better health, improved work efficiency and productivity.

972 RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF THE PROFILE OF BRAZILIAN PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS RECEIVING SICK LEAVE BENEFIT

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Introduction The health condition of professional drivers is one of the factors playing a role in assuring traffic safety. Therefore, it is essential the assessment of the profile of the drivers receiving sick leave benefits as well as the pathologies