Introduction  Stress related symptoms are common in staff of large tertiary hospitals. However, the quality of support received from management varies widely. As a Specialist Registrar in the Occupational Health Department of such a hospital, I sought to improve the competency of line managers across four key areas of stress management by providing an educational intervention.

Methods  Using a standardised self-assessment rating scale, a learning and development need was identified among line managers. This information was used in order to prepare a workshop, using a standardised approach, aimed at improving their understanding of stress, how to recognise stress in the workplace and how to manage an employee experiencing stress. After delivering the workshop, participants subsequently repeated the self-assessment rating scale, and the change in competency was measured.

Results  A statistically significant improvement was seen across all four competency levels measured, with p-values for each measuring less than 0.05. The mean scores from all participants in their post-intervention self-assessments were in excess of the 90% threshold for effectiveness in each area.

Discussion  Feedback following the workshop was positive and a clear improvement in managers’ competency was achieved. This was further supported by examining referrals to the department from workshop participants both before and after the intervention, with an improvement in the quality of information supplied noted.

Although the number of participants was small, with seven participants fully completing all evaluations, each participant is responsible for an average of twenty employees. Therefore the intervention has the potential to positively affect up to 150 employees, with a consequent reduction in absenteeism, and healthcare costs attributable to stress, likely. In order to accurately quantify this, long-term absenteeism rates should be measured.

The findings of this project demonstrate a clear benefit in engaging managers in educational workshops to improve their competency in dealing with employees who are experiencing work-related stress.

Abstracts

FACING COMPLAINING CUSTOMER AND SUPPRESSED EMOTION AT WORKSITE RELATED TO SLEEP DISTURBANCE IN KOREA

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Introduction  In recent years, there has been increasing interest in emotional labour because of the shift of the economy from the manufacturing to the service sector. This work involves a great deal of so-called ‘emotional labour’. Sleep disturbance represents an enormous impact on the wellbeing of individuals and society as a whole. This study aimed to investigate the effect of facing complaining customer and suppressed emotion at worksite on sleep disturbance among working population.

Methods  We assumed that (1) engaging complaining customers and (2) suppressing emotions at a worksite would be crucial factors in potential excessive emotional demand in service workers. This study set out to assess the association between sleep disturbance and emotional demands, including the influence of 1) and 2) above in a population-based study from a nationally representative sample of Korean workers, the Korean Working Condition Survey (KWCS) which has comprehensive questionnaires regarding the occupational information for almost fifty thousand workers in Korea. Statistical analysis was performed using the SAS 9.2 software (SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA.).

Results  Among workers in working environments where they always engage complaining customers had a significantly higher risk for sleep disturbance than rarely group (The OR [95% CI]; 5.46 [3.43–8.68] in male, 5.59 [3.30–9.46] in female workers). The OR (95% CI) for sleep disturbance was 1.78 (1.16–2.73) and 1.63 (1.02–2.63), for the male and female groups always suppressing their emotions at the workplace compared with those rarely group. Compared to those who both rarely engaged complaining customers and rarely suppressed their emotions at work, the OR (CI) for sleep disturbance was 9.66 (4.34–20.80) and 10.17 (4.46–22.07), for men and women always exposed to both factors.

Conclusion  The level of emotional demand, including engaging complaining customers and suppressing emotions at the workplace is significantly associated with sleep disturbance among Korean working population.

PRECAIRIOUS EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH HEART RATE VARIABILITY IN MEXICAN HOSPITAL WORKERS

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Introduction  Psychosocial working conditions such as employment precariousness or an imbalance between effort and reward at the workplace might result in cardiovascular diseases. One marker of cardiovascular effects is Heart Rate Variability (HRV). The objective of this study was to analyse the relation between precarious employment and HRV in health and administrative workers employed at a hospital in Mexico City.

Methods  In this cross-sectional study, 206 hospital employees without known cardiovascular diseases participated (response 90%). An interview-based questionnaire assessed sociodemographics, employment conditions, employment precariousness (EPRES) and lifestyle factors. HRV was measured over 10 min in sitting posture. Standard Deviation (SDNN) of the RR intervals over a five minutes was calculated (IBM SPSS 24).

Results  Healthcare personnel (n=106) was less likely to be active smokers (9% vs 25%) than administrative workers. Healthcare workers reported lower employment duration (24% vs 7% duration < 5 years), working more hours per week (19% vs 7% working > 60 hours/week), and more shift work (22% vs 11%) than the comparison group. They were more affected by temporality of the contract (27% vs 7%) and were less likely to suffer from economic deprivation (46% vs 69%; all p<0.05) than office workers. Mean SDNN did not differ between healthcare workers (49.93±SD 31.91) and administrative workers (54.26±41.50; p= 0.33). This was confirmed after adjusting for potential confounders. The only significant work-related predictor of