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Wellness Education and Job-Related Injuries and Illnesses for Federal Employees

Eunice Scott
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Walden University

College of Health Sciences

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Eunice Scott

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Wellness Education and Job-Related Injuries and Illnesses for Federal Employees

by

Eunice Scott

MS, Walden University, 2013

BS, Excelsior College, 2011

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Nursing Practice

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March 2017

Abstract

Work-related injuries and illnesses may lead to absenteeism, which affects the level of productivity. The purpose of this study was to determine the success of an employee workplace training program on work-related injury and illness rates at selected federal districts within a federal organization. Newman's model, which describes internal and external factors that may have an effect on an individual's health was the framework that guided this project. A pre-post design was used to compare data from 2 publically available data sets, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Illness and Injury and the Voice of the Employee Survey, for the years 2013 and 2014, before and after a wellness training program. According to a descriptive analysis of 91 illness and injury events that occurred during the 2-year period, the greatest number of employees who reported illnesses were mail handlers and mail processing clerks. Slips/trips and falls, strikes by machine/equipment or other objects, and repetitive motion were the top 3 types of injuries. After training, the total number of illness and injury days away from work, and days of limited duty were decreased, indicating a positive impact of this workplace wellness program and a need for future training for these workers. This project has the potential to affect social change by supporting the benefits of workplace wellness in improving employee health and reducing workplace injuries at federal agencies.

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my husband, Melvin, who has supported and encouraged me through this project and every educational adventure. Also, my daughters and son-in-laws, Deedre' and Deveron; Trenton and Jason, who cheered me on every step of the way. Finally, my grandchildren, Krystina, Christopher, Jasmine and Jason Jr. for who I strive to be the best role model for in the pursuit of education and attaining life goals.

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Section 1: Nature of the Project

Introduction

Occupational health and safety issues cost companies millions of dollars and can negatively impact productivity. Increased productivity at work and reduced injury or illness can be achieved through ergonomics (Kogi, 2012). Some federal organizations have addressed ergonomics in the workplace. However, Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) studies how people perform tasks as they work (ergonomics) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders-NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic, 2014, p. 1). Health and safety standards are outlined by OSHA with citation penalties for businesses ranging from \$6.4 million to \$81.34 million dollars in 2013 (Morrison, 2013, p. 52). The occupational health nurse is responsible for providing health and safety training and information to promote wellness for employees.

The organization chosen for the implementation of this study was a federal government organization with multiple districts throughout the United States. As designated by job classification, some employees are assigned tasks and duties inside while other work occurs outside of the workplace. Depending on the job classifications, work-related injuries and illnesses may occur and lead to absenteeism, absence from work without reason, and presenteeism or reporting to work in spite of a medical condition (Gosselin, Lemyre, & Corneil, 2013). For the injured or ill employee, wages may be reduced or lost as the employee recovers. The employer may experience decreased productivity at the workplace as a result of the injured or ill employees' lost

time from work or failure to stay home from work until fully recovered (Gosselin et al., 2013).

Problem Statement

In *Healthy People 2020* (2015)), the goal for occupational safety and health is to be proactive in ensuring a healthy and safe environment for workers through the prevention and early intervention of adverse incidents. Management in federal organizations are concerned with the increased number of musculoskeletal disorders and injuries due to repeated tasks, overuse of muscles, and poor posture (United States Department of Labor, 2014). Through the provision of health and safety training sessions, there is potential for engaging employees in activities that will help them take ownership of their health promotion and health protection.

Purpose Statement and Project Objectives

The purpose of this project was to determine the effectiveness of the workplace training programs on the employee work-related injury and illness rate at the selected federal districts within the organization. The objectives related to the achievement of this goal were as follows:

1. Analyze 24 months of workplace injury and illness data to determine if a change occurred in a 24-month period in employee work-related injury and illness rate.
2. Describe the training program that was implemented and the timeframe that coincides with the data collection. Evaluate the extent to which this

training program influenced the employee workplace-related injury and illness rate.

This organization monitors employee work-related injuries and illnesses in accordance with the OSHA Workplace Safety Standards. The wellness promotion and training plan was developed by the National Safety and Health Committee for the implementation by all federal districts within this organization. The employees may be asked to participate in the training sessions and to provide an evaluation upon completion of each session at many of the district locations.

Significance/Relevance to Practice

The significance of a study on workplace injuries and illnesses for federal employees is demonstrated through worker compensation allocation, absenteeism, and presenteeism which impacts productivity and employee job satisfaction. According to OSHA, although 42% of work-related injuries and illnesses declined over the past 3 decades, “almost five million workers experienced work-related injuries or illnesses in the United States” (Healthy People 2020, 2015, p. 1). Occupational health nurses play a role in the implementation of wellness promotion, injury, and medical illness prevention in the work environment. As employers focus on decreasing the number of absenteeism and presenteeism cases, in addition to lowering health care costs, there a need for wellness promotion and injury and medical illness prevention (Palumbo, Sikorski, & Liberty, 2013). Occupational health nurses have the opportunity to assist in the development and implementation of worksite nutrition and physical activity programs in addition to evidence-based wellness programs (Palumbo et al., 2013).

An analysis of the workplace injury and illness data was conducted of the data related to the injury rate for the years 2014-2015. An assessment of the training programs that were implemented during the 2014-2015 timeframe was also noted in this study. According to Kim, McInerney, and Alexander (n.d.), several factors in the workplace can contribute to workplace injuries and illnesses, including psychological, environmental, ergonomic, and physical and stress.

Project Question

The project question was as follows: Did the implementation of the organization's current wellness promotion and training plan result in a decreased number of work-related injuries and medical illnesses experienced by federal employees? Although employers focus on preventing absenteeism and presenteeism through health promotion activities that are focused on disease prevention, Gosselin et al. (2013) suggested that there is a need for developing strategies that will address the impact of the work environment and psychological indicators of performance. Workers may experience a greater benefit from educational workshops rather than receiving lecture and the dissemination of pamphlets alone (Aghilinejad et al., 2014).

Evidence-Based Significance of the Project

The scope of occupational health and safety encompasses a range of workplace injuries and illnesses that negatively impact productivity in the workplace, as well as employee motivation and satisfaction. Employers strive to protect their employees as well and to ensure sufficient levels of productivity. As OSHA Nurses and Human Resource Managers work together to determine the percentages of absenteeism and presenteeism,

new strategies must be developed to promote employee wellness and decrease the financial burden related to these issues (Soane et al., 2013).

Absenteeism plays a role in organizational productivity with the impact of health-related absences placing financial burdens on the employers (Gosselin et al., 2013).

However, many employees who are sick chose to come to work ill, which is known as presenteeism (Gosselin et al., 2013). In addition to the workers' decreased ability to maintain sufficient productivity due to illness, coworkers may also exhibit low productivity due to the spread of the illness or distraction from performing assigned duties (Merrill et al., 2012). According to Merrill et al. (2012), the combined cost of productivity loss due to presenteeism outweighs absenteeism at 77% with absenteeism at 23%. Based on data from the Work Data Loss Institute, in the United States, more than \$253 billion or the equivalent of 35% of the payroll base is lost through decreased productivity (as cited in Soane et al., 2013). Although systems may be in place for tracking workplace injuries and illnesses, there is a need for follow up and the development of action plans or interventions to assist employers in taking responsibility for their health and safety within and outside the workplace.

Implication for Social Change in Practice

There are times when intervention methods of bringing about change are to increase knowledge, change attitudes, change social influence, and build skills of self-efficacy (Hodges & Videto, 2011, p. 182). Workplace injuries and illnesses can have devastating outcomes for both the employees and employers. The OSHA requires organizations to maintain injury and illness logs for their employees as a means of

tracking workplace injuries and illnesses. During the implementation of this study, data were collected from online OSHA Workplace Safety reports related to employee injuries and illnesses at federal districts within this organization. The evaluation of the information determined changes related to the implementation of the training program aimed at helping employees change their health behaviors. In presenting the findings from the data analysis to the National Health and Safety Committee, the OSHA Department at the federal district sites will be able to improve their health and safety program based on this project. The outcome of the project indicates a need for increased staffing in the Occupational Health and Safety Department to assist in the provision of individualized counseling for employees who need guidance in adopting workplace safety practices.

Definitions of Terms

To ensure clarity of the concepts being delivered through quality improvement projects, it is necessary to define the terms to enhance the understanding of the reader. The following definitions were used in this study:

Absenteeism: A tendency to be away from work or school without a good reason: the practice or habit of being absent from work or school (Webster, n.d.).

Ergonomics: The scientific study of the work of people (Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders: NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic, 2014).

Federal agency: An administrative division within the federal government to serve assigned purposes across the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government (Morgan, 2014).

Federal employee: An individual employed by the U. S. federal government (Morgan, 2014).

Healthy People 2020: A comprehensive, nationwide health promotion and disease prevention agenda. It is designed to serve as a roadmap for improving the health of all people in the United States during the first decade of the 21st century (Healthy People 2020, year).

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs): Consist of minor physical disabilities. This term is used to describe a variety of conditions that affect the muscles, bones, and joints (Cherney, 2013)

National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH): Provides national and world leadership to prevent workplace illness and injuries (CDC, 2014).

Occupational health nurse: Registered nurses who independently observe and assess workers' health status with respect to job tasks and hazards (Explore Health Careers.org, 2014).

Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA): An agency of the U. S. government (under the Department of Labor) with the responsibility of ensuring safety at work and a healthy work environment (MedicineNet.com, 2014).

Pender's health promotion model (HPM): A framework that facilitates the integration of nursing and behavioral science (McEwen & Wills, 2011, p. 225).

Presenteeism: Reporting to work in spite of having a current acute medical condition (Gosselin et al., 2013, p. 75).

Assumptions

The wellness promotion and injury prevention programs provide information that will determine the effectiveness of the programs at the federal districts. According to Caple (2012), the direct involvement of workers in identifying MSD risk factors provides a participatory approach in identifying risk factors in the workplace. According to the CDC (2014), progress-based incentives may be effective in rewarding employees who work toward improving health and safety goals. Administration may choose to use the information received from the outcome of this project to develop employee workplace safety and wellness promotion incentives. To ensure a holistic approach to addressing MSD, managers and business owners should work together to measure the success of the injury prevention programs (Caple, 2012). The training sessions, and the Ergonomic Safety Checklist developed by the National Safety and Health Committee for ongoing safety monitoring of employees in the workplace in accordance with OSHA Workplace Safety Standards, will be helpful in evaluating the outcomes.

Limitations

Although this study can be beneficial to the organization, there are some limitations. Data collection from the selected districts was challenging in regards to the number of survey responses received during the data collection process. The need for maintaining confidentiality of employees' personal health information may cause the district occupational nurse or manager to be uncertain as to what information should be released.

Summary

The assessment of the organization's status in meeting the safety and health needs of the employees and maintaining an optimal level productivity within all districts can produce positive change in the workplace. The determination of the effectiveness of workplace safety and wellness promotion training programs and monthly site inspections on the employee injury rate across all districts within the organization could serve as a model for other governmental agencies to adopt for their workplace safety and wellness programs. This study results may also help the organization gain insight regarding areas of safety that warrant a proactive plan of action for managing safety and health issues in the work environment.

Section 2: Review of Literature and Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Introduction

Employee injuries and illnesses place a burden on both the employer and the employee. The employers lose millions of dollars due to employee absenteeism and presenteeism related to workplace injuries and illnesses (Kogi, 2012). Additionally, employees may lose wages due to lost time from work with reduced income with workers' compensation and personal sick time (Kogi, 2012). Employers and employees should work together to promote injury prevention and wellness promotion.

Search Strategy for the Literature Review

Be sure that you add the content that your chair indicated. List all of the libraries that you accessed, the databases you searched, the key terms (in italics) that you used, and the time parameters of your search (within the last 5 years).

Specific Literature

Employers are responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy environment for their employees. Many workers are exposed to risk factors at work from bending, lifting, reaching, pushing or pulling, or repetitively performing tasks (United States Department of Labor, 2014). In addition to MSD risk factors, falls are a common hazard in the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 605 workers were killed and an estimated 212,760 workers were seriously injured by falls to the same or lower level (National Institute of Health and Safety, 2014). Wellness promotion in the workplace is also important for employers to address because employees may experience chronic disease or health issues that can lead to a decline in the health status of the employees and

an increase in health-related expenses; therefore, it is important for employers to implement wellness promotion programs (Ergonomics, 2014). Annual wellness promotion programs are presented to the employees with nonmonetary incentives at the agency that was represented in this project.

General Literature

The occupational health and safety nurse plays a role in accessing information for employees. The American Association of Occupational Health and Safety Nurses (AAOHN) provides ways for the occupational nurse to access electronic resource information to help them stay knowledgeable about health and safety for their clients (Wolf et al., 2014, p. 303). However, some of the occupational health and safety nurses who are not familiar with technology will need to receive training in how to access data using technology (author, year). Gaining skills in the use of technology will enable the nurses to use electronic communication in providing injury prevention and wellness promotion information to their clients (Wolf et al., 2014). There is a need to provide the occupational health and safety nurses with the appropriate tools to use in accessing information for the clients in the workplace. This intervention enhances the clients' potential for managing their wellness promotion and injury prevention practices (Wolf et al., 2014). Although the Internet and other mobile technology sites are available to nurses, it is important that they review the literature for quality and evidence-based practice before distributing to their clients (Wolf et al., 2014). As with hospitals and other health care agencies, there is a nursing shortage in occupational health and safety departments, which prevents nurses from providing one-to-one health counseling as

needed. Occupational health nurses face many challenges in health promotion and injury prevention.

Theoretical Framework

According to McEwen and Wills (2011), in Newman's model, internal and external factors impact the client's environment and can affect a person's health at any time. McEwen and Wills (2011) stated that this practice model allows nurses to use the nursing process in diagnosing the problem, setting goals for prevention or intervention, and evaluating outcomes. The evaluation process will include data collection and goal setting that will focus on prevention and wellness promotion strategies for determining outcomes. Occupational nurses should note that psychosocial stressors may contribute to occupational health issues, such as MSD and in some cases, could present with multiple pain sites (Sembajwe et al., 2013). Ergonomics can be implemented on a small scale as a beginning point in reducing job-related injuries and chronic pain (Kogi, 2012). The goal of ergonomics is to reduce stress and to eliminate work-related injuries MSD (Cherney, 2013).

Summary

Although employers are responsible for employee workplace safety and health, a partnership with employees can motivate them to take control of their overall health protection and wellness promotion. According to Rothmore, Karnon, and Aylward (2013), for the injury prevention and wellness promotion strategies to be effective in an organization, there must be a plan in place to evaluate the interventions implemented in the training programs. Training programs that include a follow-up component has the

potential for positive outcomes for employees in the workplace that communicates to the employees that their employer is interested in their health and wellness. The employer will also benefit in the process through increased productivity as evidenced by the employees' decreased absenteeism resulting from work-related injuries and or medical illnesses.

Section 3: Methodology

Introduction

Many factors contribute to the safety and wellness of employees in the workplace. Although ergonomic assessments are helpful in determining whether or not each individual is a good fit for the task and duties, it is necessary that previous work history reports be analyzed, as well. Comparative studies including data collection and analysis can be beneficial in identifying risk factors that contribute to workplace injuries and illnesses.

Project Design/Methods

In this study, I focused on data collection and analysis of an organization's occupational health and safety departments' workplace injury prevention and wellness promotion programs. In addition to workplace injury and illness data collection, the data collection included inside and outside workplace incidents because many of the employees work outside of the building the majority of the time. Secondary data were collected, and a descriptive analysis was conducted to determine if there was a decrease in the number of illnesses and injuries after implementation of the workplace safety and wellness promotion programs within the organization.

Population and Sampling

According to Terry (2012), the quantitative approach allows for the establishment of relationship correlations and causal relationships regarding variables. The data collection included information regarding two performance indicators that the federal organization uses to evaluate progress in meeting its goal to ensure a safe work

environment for employees: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Illness & Injury (OSHA I&I Rate) and the Voice of the Employee (VOE) survey for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015 (Analysis of Postal Service Performance, 2016, p. 32). The sample size was the total number of reported injuries and illnesses with the inclusion of employee survey comments regarding their work environment as indicated for each district agency during years 2013, 2014, and 2015. The data were anonymous, and no employee identifiers were included in the data used for this project.

Data Collection

There was no contact with the federal workers. The data used were published and available online and in the public domain. Walden University IRB approval was granted prior to initiation of this data collection. IRB approval number was 09-14-16-0273618. All employee information was categorized by numbers rather than individual employee names. Information was managed confidentially and electronically for the preparation of this project.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was completed by comparing the injury and illness data results before and after implementation of the workplace training program. Tables were created to represent the aggregate data related to injury and illness by time.

Summary

Meeting the health and safety needs of workers in the workplace is crucial to increasing productivity and decreasing financial burdens on employers and employees. Employees are more likely to take responsibility for their personal health and safety when

they are allowed to participate in the process of maintaining a safe environment.

Occupational health nurses are on the frontline when it comes to assisting the injured or ill employee through the system of getting the appropriate medical attention needed. In addition to the development of strategies to motivate and help employees take responsibility for their personal injury prevention and wellness promotion in the workplace, it is imperative that employers commit to promoting occupational and environmental safety programs to produce positive employee outcomes. Another goal was to identify areas that need improvement and to develop strategies for injury prevention and to decrease the number of occupational related medical illnesses related to workplace hazardous exposures.

Section 4: Findings, Discussions, and Implications

Purpose Statement and Project Objectives

The purpose of this project was to determine the effectiveness of the workplace training programs on the employee work-related injury and illness rate at the selected federal districts within the organization. The first objective related to the achievement of this goal was to analyze 24 months of workplace injury and illness data to determine if a significant change has occurred in a 24-month period of time in employee work-related injury and illness rate (see Appendix A and B). The second objective was to describe the training program that was implemented and the timeframe that coincides with the data collection. The findings are described and discussed in this section.

Summary of Findings

During the summer of year 2013, the District Postal Workers Occupational Health Department presented a health and wellness activity. The objectives of the program were to challenge employees to take daily action to improve their health and personal finances, to help employees and their families practice recommended health and financial behaviors daily, and to provide the opportunity for employees to earn challenge points for health and wellness incentives. The program lasted for 6 weeks and included both weekly lunch and learn lectures (with handouts to support the lectures) and a health challenge component. Employees who participated in the health challenge were asked to track their progress weekly and to submit log sheets. There were approximately 800 postal workers at this facility. The occupational health nurse administrator posted flyers regarding this

training session in the lunch room and other areas within the building. This was a voluntary wellness promotion training session. Additionally, sign-up forms for volunteer participation were made available to all workers. In the initial phase of the program, a total of 110 workers volunteered to attend the lecture session, and 38 workers agreed to participate in the health challenge program. The participant ages ranged from 18 years and older and consisted of African Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans.

In order to understand any potential impact of the wellness program, data were reviewed for the years 2013 and 2014. To understand the volume of work-related injuries and illnesses both before and after the implementation of the program, two performance indicators were reviewed: the OSHA I & I Rate and the VOE survey for years 2013, 2014, and 2015 (Analysis of the Postal Service Performance, 2016, p. 32).

Table 1

Performance Goals by Performance Indicator Results and Targets

Performance Goal	Performance Indicator	FY	Target	FY	Target	not met	FY	Target
		2015	2014	Result	2013		2013	2012
Ensure a Safe Workplace and Engaged Workforce	OSHA Illness & Illness Rate	5.1	5.55	6.32	5.61	5.78	5.72	5.72
	Voice of the Employee	65.1	65.1	65.01	64.7	64.7	64.9	64.9

Note: Shaded numbers denote target not met in fiscal year under review.

The sample size was the total number of reported injuries and illnesses with the inclusions of employee survey comments regarding their work environment as indicated by the federal organization during years 2012 - 2015.

Upon completion of this data collection and analysis, of the 91 incidences reported (Appendix A and B), the OSHA log indicates that the greatest number of employees who reported illnesses were mailer handlers and mail processing clerks. Slips/trips and falls, strikes by machine/equipment and other objects, and repetitive motion appeared to be the top three incident causes, indicating a need for focus in these areas for future training. There was a reduction in frequency of overall days away from work and days of limited duty after the training, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Changes in Frequency of Work Related Injuries and Illnesses Before and After Training

Fiscal Year	Number of injured or illnesses	Number of days away from work	Number of days of limited duty
2013	47	773	1913
2014	43	604	1085
Percent Change	-8.51%	-21.86%	-43.28%

Absences from duty and reassignment or restricted duty may indicate decreased productivity and possible loss of revenue. Based on these findings, it is recommended that safety checks continue with ongoing monitoring and employee health and safety training that focuses on workplace safety and ergonomics. Employees should receive counseling with documentation when safety and policy procedures are not followed

Discussion of Findings and Implications

The initial findings are consistent with a reduction in injury or illness incidents related to the implementation of the workplace safety and training program. This project provides insights into the impact of workplace wellness on improving employee health outcomes. The recommendations based on program outcomes are to review focused local data over a longer time frame to understand the overall impact of the program. Programs aimed at improving employee health behaviors and reducing workplace injuries and illness would also impact cost benefit for the organization. A healthy workforce would be consistent with positive social change by impacting employee health, longevity, and productivity.

Strengths and Limitations of the Project

In this section, the strengths and limitations of the project are described. There are opportunities to improve the project by analyzing data specific to the population over a longer period of time. Several strengths and limitations are described below.

Project Strengths

This project provides insights into the implementation of a workplace wellness program. Groundwork is in place to continue this work with a more expanded review of the impact wellness programs on improving employee wellness.

Project Limitations

Available data were drawn from a larger aggregate population and may not represent the employees who attended the training program. A future project should

include data collected over a longer period to understand any impact on overall workplace injury and illness.

Analysis of Self

This evaluation of occupational health and safety in the workplace has provided me the opportunity to increase a level of awareness as it relates to the effectiveness of training programs in decreasing the number of injuries and illnesses in the workplace. As a health care provider and nurse manager in both local and federal agencies over the years, I have developed a passion for keeping the workplace safe for employees through education and training. I have observed decreased productivity as a result of absenteeism and presenteeism. As a scholar, there was opportunity to research literature and observed occupational health at a federal agency that employed hundreds of employees in many different positions. With the knowledge and skills acquired during this occupational health and safety project, the practitioner can make a positive impact in promoting social change for employees, employers, communities, and society as a whole.

As the developer of this project, I have had the opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of training in wellness promotion in addition to injury and illness prevention. Although training is needed in the workplace, there is a need for health counseling for employees with health issues to assist them in developing strategies to improve or maintain their health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. This project has potential for educating employers and occupational health nurses at a professional level that will restructure the occupational health and safety services provided at private, local, and federal agencies.

Summary and Conclusions

The health and safety of employees plays a role in maximizing productivity and employee satisfaction in the workplace. In general, people work well when they feel well physically, mentally, and emotionally. Employers can benefit from employees who feel that they are working in a safe environment that provides job training, injury, and illness prevention and health promotion. Reassessing the workplace occupational health and safety programs with the implementation of additional staff as needed to provide health counseling and with appropriate referrals could lead to gains in productivity and employee job satisfaction.

Section 5: Scholarly Product

This project was developed with the intended purpose of understanding how a workplace wellness program impacted employee illness and injury frequency. Upon evaluation of the data, for the period before and after the wellness program, there was indication of a reduction in the frequency of overall days away from work and days of limited duty. These results serve to support the need for further investigation. It is important to share these results with a professional audience of occupational health nurses. I have selected a poster presentation as the scholarly product for this project. The remainder of this section contains the poster text.

Title: Evaluation of Wellness Promotion Education and Training Plan for Federal Employees: Does it Reduce Job-Related Injuries and Illnesses

Eunice Scott, MS, RN, DNP-Student

Walden University

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to determine the effectiveness of the current workplace training programs on the employee work-related injury and illness rate at the selected federal districts within a federal organization

Background: Studies suggest that work-related injuries and illnesses may occur and lead to absenteeism and presenteeism which impacts the level of productivity. Healthy People indicates the need for a goal that focuses on objectives for Occupational Safety and Health from a proactive perspective in ensuring a healthy and safe environment for workers through prevention and early intervention of adverse incidences. Employers who provide wellness promotion education and training programs for their employees can promote positive outcomes in the work environment. Researchers suggest that if employers focus on wellness promotion, injury and medical illness prevention the number of absenteeism and presenteeism cases could decrease. Studies suggest that when occupational health nurses are provided the opportunity to assist in the development and implementation of worksite nutrition and physical activity programs, employee health and wellbeing can improve.

Method: The project focused on data collection and analysis of an organization's occupational health and safety departments' workplace injury prevention and wellness promotion programs. In addition to workplace injury and illness data collection the data collection included inside and outside workplace incidents since a great number of the employees work outside of the building the majority of the time. Secondary data was collected and a descriptive analysis was conducted to determine if there was a decrease in the number of illnesses and injuries after implementation of the current workplace safety and wellness promotion programs within the organization. The data collection will include information regarding two performance indicators that the federal organization utilizes to evaluate progress in meeting its goal to ensure a safe work environment for employees. The two datasets used were the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Illness & Injury (OSHA I&I Rate) and the Voice of the Employee (VOE) survey for years 2014 and 2015 (Analysis of postal service performance, 2016, p. 32). The sample size will be the total number of reported injuries and illnesses with the inclusion of employee survey comments regarding their work environment as indicated for each district agency during years 2014 and 2015. The data was anonymous; no employee identifiers were included in the data used for this project.

Participants: There will be no contact with the federal workers. The data utilized was published and available online and in the public domain. Walden University IRB approval was granted prior to initiation of this data collection. IRB approval number is 09-14-16-0273618. All employee information was categorized by numbers rather than individual employee names. Information was managed confidentially and electronically for the preparation of this project.

Analysis: Data analysis was completed by comparing the injury and illness data results before and after implementation of the workplace training program. Tables were created to represent the aggregate data related to injury and illness by time.

Results: Analysis, of ninety-one incidences that occurred during this period, indicates that the greatest number of employees that report illnesses are mailer handlers and mail processing clerks. Slips/trips and falls, strikes by machine/equipment and other objects and repetitive motion appears to be the top three incident causes. There was a reduction in frequency of overall days away from work and days of limited duty, before and after the training.

Conclusions: The health and safety of employees plays a key role in maximizing productivity and employee satisfaction in the workplace. In general, people work well when they feel well physically, mentally and emotionally. Employers can benefit from employees feel they are working in a safe environment that provides job training, injury and illness prevention and health promotion. The results of this project did indicate a benefit in reducing workplace injuries when a wellness program was implemented. Reassessing the workplace occupational health and safety programs with the implementation of additional staff as needed to provide health counseling and with

appropriate referrals could exhibit great gains in productivity and employee job satisfaction.

Social Change: This project has potential to impact social change and improve employee health by supporting the positive impact of occupational health and safety services provided at private, local and federal agencies.

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Appendix A. Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses

District A FY 2013				
Job Title	Description of injury or illness	Object or substance that directly injured or made person ill	Number of days away from work	Number of days on limited duty
Mail Processing Clerk	Contusion: left knee (Left) trip over the concrete barrier (wheel stop)	Injury Falls from Curbs	2 days	0
Mail Handler	Fracture: left knee (Left) Employee was pushing wirecon into a dumping hopper and stepped on a piece of paper slipped and twisted his knee	Injury General Slipping/Twisting – No Fall	17 days	0
Maintenance Mechanic	Left side Bruised side from impact (Left) struck by bicycle as he exited the Maintenance Shop	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	6 days	9 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Laceration: right index finger (Right) While sitting in a chair, she reached back to pull the chair forward and cut her finger on an exposed metal that was not attached to the chair	Injury Pulling at Same Level	8 days	0
Mail Processing Clerk	Strain in right shoulder, extending to mid	Injury Other	0	180 days

	bicep. Top of shoulder of (Right)	Repetitive Motions-Other		
Mail Processing Clerk	Left foot – Hamper became full with parcels and employee needed to replace it.	All other illnesses General-Not Elsewhere Classified	0	180 days
Mail Handler	Contusion: Right hand, middle finger. While arranging parcel to be read by barcode, employee reached back and struck hand against a piece of metal	Injury General-Strike Against Material/Equip	18 days	49 days
Materials Handling Equipment	Neck and Lower Back pain. While stopped at a traffic light, pov slid on ice/snow road resulting in striking the rear of the postal vehicle	Injury Struck by Vehicle	3 days	6 days
Mail Handler Equipment Operator	Severe Left shoulder to elbow pain. While hooking and unhooking tow bars for PIT equipment, experienced sharp pain in shoulder extending to elbow.	All Other Illness Repetitive Motion - Other	1 day	7 days
Mail Handler	Lower back snapped. An oversized parcel was dumped onto the	Injury General Stooping/Bending	2 days	0

Mail Processing Clerk	<p>belt and the employee was removing it when he felt a pain in his lower back. Sciatica nerve back pain spasm and right leg pain. After walking to the automation unit, employee felt pain in right leg.</p>	All other illnesses General –Not Elsewhere Classified	3 days	0
Building Equipment Mechanic	<p>Neck and Back Injury with muscle spasm. Employee was driving along Williamsburg Road when he stopped at a traffic intersection of Nine Mile and Williamsburg Roads. While waiting for the light to change to green, the postal vehicle that he was driving was hit in the rear by a pov.</p>	Injury MV-Collsn/Sideswipe Stat Veh/Obj	45 days	0
Electrical Technician	<p>Laceration to top of head when he came out from under a machine and hit head on safety switch.</p>	Injury General – Strike Against Material /EQPT	1 Day	0
Mail Handler	<p>Right shoulder sprain. Employee was using a Sheppard’s hook to assist with pulling and</p>	Injury Pulling at Same Level	34 days	134 days

	spreading heavy bundles of mail out of the dumper onto the transport belt of the APPS. Medical Treatment provided and employee was transported to hospital.			
Maintenance Mechanic	Strain Left Shoulder. On 3/29/13 full time maintenance employee was putting replacement belt in the transport section of the DBCS when something "popped in his left shoulder.	Injury Pulling at Same Level	14 days	57 days
Electronic Technician	Laceration to finger on right hand. Sustained a laceration to his finger on his right hand.	Injury General Strike Against Material/Equipment	8 days	0
Mail Processing Clerk	Strain left hand. Employee states her hand swelled and she felt pain in her left hand. Employee states that while moving flats out of the caster trays into flat tubs, she started to feel pain in her left	Injury Repetitive Motion-Other	0	6 days

	hand followed by swelling.			
Supervisor Distribution Operator	Bee sting between left forearm and wrist while spreading mail on dock.	Injury Insect Bite/Sting	2 days.	0
Maintenance Mechanic MPE	Soreness from fall outside of his right shoulder. While looking up at the minitron that determines where jams are on the machine, employee tripped on loose bundle strapping and fell to the ground. He used his right arm to brace the fall.	Injury Falls to Floors	46 days	29 days
Mail Handler	Pain in left shoulder after repetitive motion. While employee was lifting heavy trays of standard mail she experienced a sharp pain in her left shoulder.	All Other Illnesses Repetitive Motion- Other	11 days	169 days
Mail Handler Equipment Operator	Multiple fracture on right side of body.	Injury Falls to Floors	62 days	118 days
Mail Handler	Sprain to right thumb as employee was putting the mail into ACT she felt a pain in her right thumb and noticed it was swelling.	Injury Handling at Same Level	7 days	173 days

General Expeditor	Left side and lower back pain.	Injury Lifting From/To Higher Level Lift and Pulled Medco Sacks	129 days	51 days
GRP LDR Mail Handler	Sprain left and right knee while utilizing Tug for transporting mail and equipment continuously.	Injury Repetitive Motion-Other	4 days	0
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Bruise to right first toe. A letter tray cart had a drawer that was detached (#47) on DBCS (#25). He pulled the drawer out to place the mail pulled (swept) into the tray. The metal drawer came apart from the tray cart fell on right foot injuring the first right toe.	Injury Struck by Material/Equipment	3 days	0
Motor Vehicle Operator	Thoracic strain Lower back area. Employee was preparing to load his assigned vehicle he stood facing the door of the truck when he bent down to open the door using his right hand. When he pulled the door up he stated that he felt a pull and a pain in his lower back. Proper	Injury Pulling From/to A Higher Level	0	3days

	ergonomics is a concern.			
Mail Processing Clerk	Contusion on right index finger. Employee was raising the shelf on an APC. The safety latch did not meet the container and the shelf fell back down and smashed his right index finger.	Injury General-Strike Against Material/Equipment	0	12 days
Laborer Custodial	Back strain lower back. Employee was dumping dust when he felt something slip in his back.	Injury Handling at Same Level	3 days	0
Carpenter	Cut on right pointer finger. Employee was using a Vertalift to support the beam but he lost the bolt. When he removed the second bolt, the beam slipped and hit his finger.	Injury Struck by Falling Object	0	10 days
Mail Processing Clerk	Groin/Abdomen. Employee was moving yellow street trays off casters for dumping into flat trays inside of APCs when she felt pain and discomfort in her abdomen and groin.	Injury Handling at the Same Level	1 day	0

Mail Handler	Employee stepped back to lift a tray of mail from the skid to load into the HSTS when the anti-fatigue mat located underneath her feet shifted when she was unable to walk for a short period of time. Continued to experience pain in her left knee when she regained the ability to walk.	Injury General Slipping/Twisting No Fall	0	16 days.
Motor Vehicle Operator	Sprain left wrist. Driver was pulling BMC on the trailer when he heard a pop in his wrist. The driver's statement indicated that he was trying to align BMC with pin hole in the floor of the trailer, he missed the hole and felt the pop in his wrist when he pulled back on the BMC.	Injury Pull at Same Level	142 days	38 days
Mail Processing Clerk	Sharp pain in left wrist. While the employee was taking mail off the machine a sharp pain went through is left wrist.	Injury Lifting From/To A Higher Level	0	146 days

Mail Processing Clerk	Right hand pain. Employee was lifting letter trays repetitively during the night.	Injury Lifting From/To A Higher Level	1 day	0
Mail Processing Clerk	Contusion to the top of left foot. Gate fell on foot.	Injury Struck by Material/Equipment	1 day	6 days
Lead Mail Processor	Right upper arm. Yellow jacket stung employee on her right upper arm.	Injury Insect Bite/Sting	0	3 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Rotator Cuff Syndrome. Left shoulder. Employee was pulling down the mail for dispatch and felt a pain go up into her shoulder blade.	All Other Illnesses Repetitive Motions-Other	0	180 days
Mail Handler	Sprain to both sides of lower back. While manually loading 3c flat tubs onto feeding conveyer, employee felt a "twing" in his back.	All Other Illnesses Lifting From/To Higher Level	6 days	0
Mail Handler	Strain to left elbow. Employee was loading mail at samp on FSS #3 when he put right hand on crossbar and reached down with left hand to pick up skid , the bar moved and the employee put	Injury General Stooping/ Bending	2 days	0

	his left hand down to break his and strained his elbow.			
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Pain in right wrist. Felt pain in wrist while lifting an object.	Injury Lifting From/To Higher Level	0	96 days
Tractor Trailer Operator	Trauma to right ankle. Employee was loading his trailer when he stepped into a hole that was in the floor which he was unaware of.	Injury Pushing at Same Level	5 days	0
Mail Handler	Sprain to the Left Wrist. Falls to Floors. Employee fell face down on her left hand and hurt her left wrist.	Injury Falls to Floors	1 day	6 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Contusion to right hand. Employee tried to pull a jam but could not. She looked up for the blinking light but it was not blinking so she put her hand in inside to find the jam and the machine turned on and caught her right hand between two wheels where it was stuck for a while.	Injury General Caught in Under/Between	1day	0
Mail Processing Clerk	Left Knee. Employee was lifting a large parcel and turned	Injury Falls to Floors	129 days	26 days

Mail Processing Clerk	to the left, lost footing and fell. Pain in right shoulder. Pained occurred while changing position when moving mail from bins.	Injury Handling at Same Level	4 days	176 days
Mail Processing Machine Operator	Right middle finger. Employee injured his right middle finger while conducting search and seizure. A piece of paper was covering the eye reader.	Injury Handling at Same Level	2 days	27 days
* Mail Processing Clerk	Stress. Unfavorable incident with supervisor.	All Other Illnesses General-Not Elsewhere Classified	49 days	0

Appendix B. Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses

District A. FY 2014				
Job Title	Description of injury or illness	Object or substance that directly injured or made person ill	Number of days away from work	Number of days on limited duty
Mail Handler	Employee cut left middle finger on left hand while cutting flat bundles wit postal issued plastic/strapping cutters.	Injury Pulling at The Same Level	0	9 days
Mail Processing Clerk	Strain Left Rib. Employee states he hit his ribs on the side of a tray rack as he was trying to pass between two tray racks.	Injury General Cut In/Under/Between	0	22 days
Electronic Technician	Employee cut his right index finger while attempting to change the belt on the machine.	Injury General –Caught In/Under/Between	0	10 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Employee felt lower back pain on both side following her lifting priority parcels.	All Other Illnesses Lifting From/To A Higher Level	39 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee stated he felt a crook/pain in his back and neck 3 days later after lifting a 68lb package.	Injury General Stooping /Bending	2 days	29 days

Bulk Mail Tech	Employee states that he slipped and fell on black ice when he was walking to the facility. He stated that he hit his head on the left side and his left elbow.	Injury Falls from Curbs	0	0
Bulk Mail Tech	Employee complained of pain on lower back radiating down his left leg. She was struck by a driver from Commonwealth Mailing.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	86 days	95 days
Mail Handler Equipment Operator	Strain to left ankle. Employee received a strain to his left ankle when hit by a Mule.	Injury Pulling at Sane Level		180 days
Mail Handler	Hematoma left thigh. Employee bumped his left thigh into a stack of empty hampers as he was trying to go around another stack.	Injury General Strike Against the Material/Equipment	7 days	173 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a sharp pain in his upper back when as he through trays into an all-purpose container.	Injury Throwing at The Same Level	2 days	0
Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced sharp pain and burning in left shoulder.	Injury Repetitive Motions- Other	5 days	51days

Motor Vehicle Operator	Employee experienced weakness of hip and with a sharp pain down leg as she moved from a sitting position to a standing position.	Injury Falls from Chairs and Stools	104 days	59 days
Electronic Technician	Employee was using his shoulder to support the lag roller belt when he tore a ligament in his outer right shoulder.	Injury Pushing To/From A Higher Level	0	164 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a strain to his neck when the door of the BMC struck him on the head.	Injury Struck by Material/OR Equipment	1 day	0
Bulk Mail Tech	Employee experienced stress anxiety. Felt heaviness in chest. Employee claims occupational stress related to job assignment.	General –Elsewhere Classified All Other Illnesses	180 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee experience a rash on the entire body. Employee taken to the hospital emergency room.	Injury Contact Chemical (Includes Dog Spray)	5 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a pain in left forearm while lifting heavy	Injury Repetitive Motions-Other	0	120 days

	parcels into containers.			
Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced pain in right shoulder.	Injury Repetitive Motions - Other	2 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee cut his left thumb with cutter.	Injury General Not Elsewhere Classified		11 Days
Mail Processing Clerk	Employee was struck by falling objects on both thumbs.	Injury Struck by Falling Objects	36 days	3 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a fracture of his left ring finger when he attempted to step over a guard rail.	Injury Falls to Floors	49 days	131 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced left knee injury when he was walking down from the mezzanine. States his left knee buckled.	Injury General –Not Elsewhere Classified	0	3days
Mail Handler	Employed experienced a sprain right shoulder. Injury caused by repeated lifting of mail sacks above shoulder heights into BMCs.	Injury General –Not Elsewhere Classified	17 days	39 days
Electronic Technician	Employee experienced a contusion to upper left thigh. Fractures or breaks to left chest. Stepped off of machine into	Injury Falls to Sidewalk/Ground	7 days	0

	guard rail post and slipped.			
Mail Handler	Employee strained left knee while pushing the APC to the assigned staging area.	Injury Pushing at same Level	1 day	106 days
General Expeditor	Employee experienced a contusion to left lower leg when she slipped on a wet floor.	Injury Falls to Floors	1 day	13 days
Mail Handler Assistant	Employee experienced swollen right eye and rash on upper body-arms, chest and neck upon returning from the restroom.	Injury General Not Elsewhere Classified	7 days	11 days
Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced a contusion to the left knee while feeding the mail. Two latches were missing from the machine which lead to the mail falling out and landing on the employee's knee.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	4 days	0
Tractor Trailer Operator	Employee experienced acute coccyx or sacral pain when attempting to open the truck door. His foot slipped and he fell.	Injury Falls to Floors	0	21 days

PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced swelling of back when the top of an APC fell on her point.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	1 day	0
Mail Handler of Equipment Operator	Employee Experienced Bicep Tendonitis of the upper left arm while pushing a BMC.	Injury Pushing at Same Level	0	31 Days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced sprain to left shoulder while pulling operating caster.	Injury General Not Elsewhere Classified	0	91 days
Parcel Post Distribution Machine	Employee experienced injury to right upper shoulder while working on the APBS sweeping.	Injury General Not Elsewhere Classified	1 day	50 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced a sprain to the right wrist during a fall.	Injury Falls to Floors	1 day	34 days
Building Equipment Mechanic	Employee experienced a sprain to the lower arm and elbow.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	0	6 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a right ankle when struck by rolling APC.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	13 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a concussion to the head when exiting	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	18 days	0

	through the Turnstile.			
Mail Clerk Processing	Employee experienced pain in both wrists.	All Other Illnesses Repetitive Motions - Other	1 day	0
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a wrist pain while lifting trays of 3rd class mail weighing 40 to 60 lbs from the conveyor to the AP.	Injury Lifting To/ From A Higher Level	0	14 days
Motor Vehicle Operator	Employee twisted his left ankle while dismounting the vehicle	Injury Falls to Sidewalks/Ground	5 days	7 days
Laborer Custodial	Employee experienced left shoulder pain while sweeping in the APPS area.	Injury Repetitive Motions- Other	0	42 days
Maintenance Mechanic MPE	Employee experienced injury to left elbow while replacing the belt on a pulley for DBCS.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	4 days	44 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a pulled muscle in back while lifting heavy tubs in high speed tray system.	Injury Lifting To/ From A Higher Level	0	15 days.
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a pulling in front left chest while	Injury Lifting To/ From A Higher Level	0	21 days

	stacking flat bundles.			
Mail Handler	Employee cut left middle finger on left hand while cutting flat bundles with postal issued plastic/strapping cutters.	Injury Pulling at The Same Level	0	9 days
Mail Processing Clerk	Strain Left Rib. Employee states he hit his ribs on the side of a tray rack as he was trying to pass between two tray racks.	Injury General Cut In/Under/Between	0	22 days
Electronic Technician	Employee cut his right index finger while attempting to change the belt on the machine.	Injury General –Caught In/Under/Between	0	10 days
PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Employee felt lower back pain on both side following her lifting priority parcels.	All Other Illnesses Lifting From/To A Higher Level	39 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee stated he felt a crook/pain in his back and neck 3 days later after lifting a 68lb package.	Injury General Stooping /Bending	2 days	29 days
Bulk Mail Tech	Employee states that he slipped and fell on black ice when he was	Injury Falls from Curbs	0	0

	walking to the facility. He stated that he hit his head on the left side and his left elbow.			
Bulk Mail Tech	Employee complained of pain on lower back radiating down his left leg. She was struck by a driver from Commonwealth Mailing.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	86 days	95 days
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Mail Handler	Hematoma left thigh. Employee bumped his left thigh into a stack of empty hampers as he was trying to go around another stack.	Injury General Strike Against the Material/Equipment	7 days	173 days
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a sharp pain in his upper back when as he through trays into an all-purpose container.	Injury Throwing at The Same Level	2 days	0
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Mail Handler	Employee experienced a strain to his neck when the door of the BMC struck him on the head.	Injury Struck by Material/ OR Equipment	1 day	0
Bulk Mail Tech	Employee experienced stress anxiety. Felt heaviness in chest. Employee claims occupational stress related to job assignment.	General –Elsewhere Classified All Other Illnesses	180 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee experience a rash on the entire body. Employee taken to the hospital emergency room.	Injury Contact Chemical (Includes Dog Spray)	5 days	0
Mail Handler	Employee experienced a pain in left forearm while lifting heavy	Injury Repetitive Motions- Other	0	120 days

	parcels into containers.			
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Electronic Technician	Employee experienced a contusion to upper left thigh. Fractures or breaks to left chest. Stepped off of machine into	Injury Falls to Sidewalk/Ground	7 days	0

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Tractor Trailer Operator	Employee experienced acute coccyx or sacral pain when attempting to open the truck door. His foot slipped and he fell.	Injury Falls to Floors	0	21 days

PSE Mail Processing Clerk	Employee experienced swelling of back when the top of an APC fell on her point.	Injury Struck by Material or Equipment	1 day	0
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