

CURRENT ISSUES CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract: Mental health problems are both in Europe and in Romania, one of the leading causes of workplace absenteeism and early retirement. Occupational stress is a pattern of reactions that occur when employees are working burdens not corresponding to their knowledge, skills, resources and capabilities and force them to adapt in relation to the time pressure or workload, difficulty of work. The importance of mental health is recognized in Europe and is presented in the Community Strategy for Health and Work Safety for the period 2007 – 2012. WHO estimates that taking into account the psychological problems will be the main source of disability by 2020, recommended a change in organizational culture and orientation towards prevention and promoting mental health at work.

Cuvinte cheie: stres profesional, sănătate mintală, incapacitate de muncă

Rezumat: Problemele de sănătate mintală reprezintă atât în Europa cât și în România, una din principalele cauze de absenteism la locul de muncă și de pensionare precoce. Stresul profesional este un tipar de reacții care apar atunci când angajaților li se impun sarcini de muncă necorespunzătoare cunoștințelor, aptitudinilor, resurselor și capacităților lor și care îi forțează să se adapteze, în legătură cu presiunea timpului sau cu volumul de muncă, dificultatea muncii. Importanța sănătății mintale este recunoscută în Europa și este prezentată în Strategia Comunitară de Sănătate și Securitate în Muncă pentru perioada 2007 – 2012. Ținând cont de previziunile OMS că problemele psihice vor fi principala sursă de incapacitate de muncă până în anul 2020, se recomandă o schimbare a culturii organizaționale și orientarea spre prevenția și promovarea sănătății mintale la locul de muncă

INTRODUCTION

Mental health problems are both in Europe and in Romania, one of the leading causes of workplace absenteeism and early retirement.

Although jobs are diverse and multiple cultural backgrounds employees, work remains an essential component of most adult lives, personal value, economic and social development.

Mental health is an essential component of health and reflects the balance between the individual and its environment. Good mental health and its preservation is important both in terms of individual and society point of view.

Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. Is a form of subjective well-being when individuals feel they may face challenges and assume responsibilities

People with mental health problems can be divided into three groups:

- at any time a sixth of the population is associated with deterioration of mental health symptoms, such as: sleep disturbances, fatigue, irritability, restlessness, that do not meet diagnostic criteria for mental disorder, but the person's ability to function properly is affected
- another sixth of the population has symptoms that, by nature, severity and duration, meet the diagnostic criteria for non-psychotic mental disorders and should be treated because it prevents the individual to perform his work and daily activity. The most common disorder present in this category are: depression, anxiety and turmoil that combines the two diseases.
- about 0.5% of the population has a severe mental illness,

psychosis spectrum, requiring intensive treatment, long-term, sometimes lifelong

Occupational stress is a pattern of reactions that occur when employees are working burdens not corresponding to their poor knowledge, skills, resources and capabilities and force them to adapt in relation to time pressure, the volume of work, or labor difficulties.

Vulnerability to psychosocial stress, exhaustion and mental health problems is increasingly common as the nature of work in Europe and in Romania in particular, continues to change. New ways of working appear to adapt to the challenges of global competition economy, with increasing insecurity of employment, implemented technological changes, the lack of professional management systems and the political climate, often unstable. (2)

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in 2007 emphasizes psychosocial risk factors that generate deterioration of the mental health: decreased job security, increasing the number of contracts for a period of time, intensifying work without additional compensation, high emotional demands at work, including intimidation and violence and precarious balance between work and personal life. (10)

The importance of mental health is recognized in Europe and is presented in the Community Strategy for Health and Safety for the period 2007 to 2012. (1) It is mentioned the direct contribution of the quality of mental health to the labor productivity growth, as the Lisbon Strategy is trying placing Europe at the top of the world economy. (2)

WHO estimates that taking into account the psychological problems will be the main source of disability by

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2020, recommended a change in the organizational culture and orientation towards prevention and mental health promotion at work. (3)

European Commission White Paper "Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008 - 2013", highlighting the substantial economic costs of mental disorders, notes that most of them resulted in reduced productivity at work (4)

Job insecurity has two effects: early and strain, both with the consequence of occurrence of the occupational stress.

The most important sources of stress in organizations (14):

1. Overuse of workplace
2. Lack of recognition of the merits from the colleagues side part
3. Poor relations with the chiefs
4. Lack of participation in the decision making at individual and organizational level
5. Lack of information (organizational or individual level)
6. Job insecurity (more pronounced in conditions of the economic crisis)
7. Lack of control at the workplace

It is important to note that people can not separate their personal and professional life. (5)

Stressors acting on family life or personal life may affect the behavior at work or may be added to those at work, resulting in health problems.

Every manager and employee should know the factors that lead to stress (stress agents), how to identify them and what can be done to eliminate or reduce it. (6)

Stressors at work: (10)

- Leadership style: lack of clear objectives, poor communication and lack of information within the organization, failure to consult and non-involvement of employees in changes and modifications in the workplace, lack of support from the superiors
- Status, role in the organization: organization status unclear, conflicting objectives and priorities, high level of responsibility at work
- Career: uncertainty in career development, career development frustration, uncertainty and lack of recognition status, job insecurity, lack of training, change of status within the organization
- Decision and control: low participation in decision making, lack of control over their work
- Relations at work: physical or social isolation, poor relationships with supervisors, lack of communication, interpersonal conflicts, different types of harassment (verbal aggression, sexual harassment, etc.)
- Job design: repetitive and monotonous work tasks, significant risks of injury and occupational diseases at work (injury risk technologies, noise, chemical pollutants, etc.), fear of technology in relation to responsibility, lack of competence
- Work load and pace of work: lack of control over work pace, overloaded or underloaded work tasks, the lack of prioritization of activities
- Working hours: inflexible working hours, the occurrence of pregnancy imprevisible regarded the work overload, unplanned overtime, shift work, excessive overtime presence of pollutants in the workplace chemical, biological, noise, mechanical, temperature limit, stress, aggression at work.

In the European Union, stress at work is the second health problem related to work after back disorders, the most common health problems at work. It affects 28% of EU

employees. Stress at work can be caused by psychosocial risks such as design activities, work organization and management, eg special professional applications and fewer opportunities to control their own activities or issues such as violence and harassment at the workplace. Some physical hazards such as noise and temperature in the working environment can also cause stress at work. Preventing work-related stress is one of the objectives set out in Commission Communication on the new strategy on health and safety at work. (7)

Stress at work causes more than a quarter of all sick leave duration of which is at least two weeks of absences from work. After 1999, estimates of costs due to stress at work in EU countries is around 20 billion per year. Stress at work can lead to conditions such as depression, anxiety, nervousness, fatigue and heart disease. In addition, stress leads to disruptions in terms of productivity, creativity and competitiveness. (8)

According to WHO, mental health and stress-related disorders are the most common causes of death in Europe combined, in terms of premature deaths. Depression, suicide and other stress-related disorders with harmful lifestyles with psychosomatic diseases cause immense suffering people and their families and draw significant economic effects for society. (3)

A mental health impairment affects the individual and his group themselves socially, problems generated by taking an unprecedented scale as expected because one in four Europeans develop a mental health problem during their lives. Each year, up to 10% of Europe's population suffers from depression in varying degrees while all summed psychotic disorders, occurring in 2.6%. (9)

The prevalence of depression in the population was estimated at about 12%, the figures varying in each community, partly because of the way of research that relies mainly on the auto-rapportation and is influenced by the organization of the private health systems of each state.

Table no. 1. Approximate number of subjects of the EU population (between 18-65 years) affected by mental disorders in a 12 months period

Diagnosis	%	Million subjects
Major Depression	6,9	18,9
Specific Phobias	6,4	18,5
Somatoform Disorders	6,3	18,4
Alcoholism	2,4	7,2
Social phobia	2,3	6,7
Panic Attack	1,8	5,9
Generalised anxiety disorder	1,7	5,3
Agoraphobia	1,3	4,0
Bipolar Disorder	0,9	3,7
Obsessive-compulsive disorder	0,7	2,7
Drugs dependence	0,5	2,0
Eating Disorders	0,4	1,6

Average of all available European data were estimated by the National German Examination Survey and Health Questionnaire (13)

The prevalence of mental disorders is higher in women than in men, and the age range most commonly affected is between 35-54 years. Mental disorders is both the cause and effect of deterioration of the individual professional and personal life, observing a social disadvantage more common in them: they are short of highly qualified employment, are often divorced or separated and living alone, caring for their own children (single parent families) do not have a form of social protection and support of specialized institutions, low educational level, seasonal employment, low income and low living standard. (9)

Working conditions studied in EU, which is associated

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with increased mental disorders are presented in Table 2, as of the fourth European Survey on Working Conditions 2005. (11)

Table no. 2. Working conditions studied in EU, associated with increased mental disorders

Working conditions	Total %	Men %	Women %
Work organization and its content			
High speed work	60	63	56
Short term work	62	68	54
Repetitive moves with short duration (under 10 minutes)	39	37	41
Monotonous burdens	43	42	44
No control on work			
No control on the burdens succesion	36	37	36
No control on the work method	33	33	33
No control on the speed of the work	31	31	31
Reduced social support			
Low support from the colleagues	33	33	33
Low support from the part of the superior	44	46	42
Work programme			
Prolonged programme	16	22	9
Work in shifts	17	17	17
Harassment and discrimination	5	4	6
Uncertainty work place, satisfaction of the earnings			
The workplace may be lost in following 6 months	13	13	13
The wage is not corresponding	56	53	59
The workplace doesn't offer possibilities of promotion	68	66	71

Occupational stress is not a disease itself, objectivised only through its effects on individuals and causing a wide range of psychological symptoms, physical, social and economic consequences that directly reflect the health and unhappy person, her performance at work, creativity and productivity. Stress effects are felt across the organization in a negative way by changing the performance of the sectors of activity and the overall performance. (10)

Based on an estimated self-reports related to stress, depression or anxiety affects 563,000 people in the UK causing some 13.5 million working days / year. Employees invoked more often work-related stress and mental health problems for early retirement, resulting in average retirement age of 48 years for psychiatric disorders studied in 2003. (12)

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