



# A project on the wellness practices of MNC (hospital) employees and recommendations on wellness practices

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## **ABSTRACT**

The workplace stands as a pivotal environment for fostering health and thwarting diseases and strokes. While well-crafted workplace wellness initiatives hold promise in enhancing health outcomes and mitigating health concerns, their widespread adoption remains limited, and their efficacy varies. Numerous organizations acknowledge worksite wellness efforts, but often these programs lack a strong emphasis on comprehensive health. Although some evidence suggests a correlation between robust employer health management and favorable healthcare cost trajectories, further scrutiny is warranted.

A proposed strategy involves instituting a national recognition program rooted in evidence-based best practices and Life's Simple 7 metrics. This initiative aims to aid employers in implementing optimal wellness frameworks. Resources should be developed to support employers in meeting stringent health standards and accessing top-tier comprehensive workplace wellness programs. Encouraging innovation and fostering additional research in this domain are critical for enhancing the health outcomes of all hospital employees.

This project delves into workplace wellness programs, scrutinizing their attributes, prevalence, impact on employee health and medical expenses, determinants of success, and the role of incentives. The authors employed four distinct data collection and analysis methodologies. They conducted a comprehensive review of both scholarly and industry literature, surveyed employers on a national scale, analyzed longitudinal medical claims and wellness program data across a cohort of employers, and scrutinized the efficacy of five existing wellness initiatives across diverse employer types. This multifaceted approach aimed to assess effectiveness and gather insights from both employees and employers.

**Keywords:** workplace wellness programs, health outcomes, diseases, strokes, efficacy, national recognition program, evidence-based, Life's Simple 7 metrics, optimal frameworks, resources, comprehensive health, innovation



## **SYNOPSIS**

Unhealthy lifestyles, compounded by prolonged periods of desk-bound work typical of roles in administrative and IT departments within hospitals, have precipitated a surge in chronic ailments like diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory conditions. These conditions not only erode quality of life, but also elevate the risk of premature mortality and disability while inflating healthcare expenditures. Moreover, chronic diseases now afflict individuals in their working prime, resulting in productivity losses due to both absenteeism and presenteeism. In response, employers are increasingly embracing workplace wellness programs to champion health promotion and disease prevention.

Such programs are geared towards forestalling disease onset or detecting and managing ailments in their nascent stages. Health promotion within these initiatives advocates behaviour modification to enhance overall well-being. Workplace wellness programs come in various forms, ranging from singular interventions to multifaceted schemes, and may be administered directly by employers or facilitated through vendors or group health plans. Leveraging employers' access to employees at a younger age, these programs possess the potential to profoundly influence long-term health outcomes.

This report delineates employee health and wellness programs as amalgamations of tools for identifying health risks, behavior modification initiatives, educational reservoirs, and alterations to the work environment. A holistic program should harmonize with the organization's strategic objectives, incorporate incentives to spur participation, and receive sustained financial backing over multiple years to ensure viability. Successful implementations further hinge on endorsement from senior leadership and the establishment of metrics for gauging progress and outcomes.



## **INTRODUCTION**

Workplace wellness programs serve as structured initiatives designed to facilitate voluntary behavioral changes, mitigate health risks, and enhance functionality for individuals and their families. Chronic diseases, enduring for extended periods typically three months or more, primarily stem from both controllable factors such as diet and uncontrollable factors like cancer. These diseases have burgeoned globally due to unhealthy habits including poor dietary choices, tobacco use, and sedentary lifestyles, substantially impacting urban populations and ranking among the foremost causes of death and disability. Furthermore, chronic ailments indiscriminately affect individuals of all ages and social strata, with sedentary work patterns exacerbating the issue and impeding economic growth, labor market performance, and human capital accumulation. However, embracing healthy behaviors such as balanced nutrition and physical activity can mitigate the adverse effects of chronic diseases, necessitating proactive measures to prevent their occurrence and manage their consequences.

Workplace wellness programs have emerged as effective tools in mitigating key factors contributing to cardiovascular diseases and strokes, encompassing obesity, smoking, hypertension, physical inactivity, abnormal cholesterol levels, and diabetes. While historical programs primarily focused on education and screening, recent research underscores the efficacy of environmental and policy modifications in effecting lasting behavioral changes across diverse socioeconomic strata. Consequently, worksite wellness initiatives assume a pivotal role in preventing diseases afflicting a substantial portion of the populace. The American Heart Association (AHA) and its regional affiliates have long championed these programs in workplaces. Nevertheless, variations in accessibility and implementation prompt the AHA to reassess its recommendations based on the latest research to enhance program efficacy.

The workplace serves as a pivotal arena for assessing and mitigating the risk of life-threatening diseases, given the sizable employed adult demographic globally poised to benefit from ongoing health and wellness engagement. Although numerous employers offer workplace wellness initiatives, comprehensive data on their prevalence or adherence to Healthy People 2010 criteria remain scant. To fully harness the potential of workplace wellness programs, the imperative for high-quality, comprehensive initiatives is underscored. Aligned with the objective of improving cardiovascular health and reducing related mortality, the AHA/ASA endeavors to establish a nationwide recognition program lauding workplaces for their endeavors in promoting wellness geared towards preventing cardiovascular diseases and strokes. This program will furnish metrics and benchmarks for assessing program quality and efficacy, distinguishing itself by offering incremental value.

In the United States, workplaces, housing over 130 million employees, provide an opportune platform for cardiovascular disease prevention efforts. Wellness programs therein have proven instrumental in combating major risk factors precipitating heart diseases, including smoking, obesity, hypertension, abnormal cholesterol levels, sedentary lifestyles, and diabetes. The economic burden of medical care for employees harboring such risk factors constitutes a substantial proportion of a company's annual medical expenses. Successful wellness initiatives extend benefits not only to employees but also to their families, fostering a collective adoption of healthy lifestyles. By mitigating these risk factors, worksite wellness programs contribute to alleviating the burden of chronic diseases, auguring societal benefits beyond the workplace. However, fostering comprehensive wellness programs poses challenges, particularly for small-scale employers, necessitating adequate time and resource allocation.

A study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in collaboration with the World Economic Forum's Working Towards Wellness initiative sheds light on the impediments businesses face due to the pervasive prevalence of chronic diseases, which rank among the leading causes of global mortality and disability. The study endeavors to catalyze greater engagement in chronic disease prevention through employee wellness programs, advocating for CEOs and leaders to prioritize employee health, delineating actionable steps for companies to realize this commitment, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders in this endeavor. The study's relevance is underscored in the Indian context, where chronic diseases are burgeoning and significantly impacting the workforce, precipitating losses due to disability, absenteeism, and presenteeism. By elucidating global findings in the Indian context, the report aims to equip corporations, especially in the IT and IT-enabled services sectors, with actionable insights garnered from both Indian and global experiences to foster effective wellness program adoption.

# Workplace wellness benefits



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Globally, chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and diabetes mellitus (DM) pose a significant threat, accounting for a substantial portion of global mortality. In 2005, chronic diseases claimed the lives of 35 million individuals, double the number of deaths attributed to infectious diseases combined. Forecasts indicate a projected 17% increase in chronic disease-related fatalities over the next decade, fueled by factors like population aging and heightened risk exposure. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), particularly prevalent due to sedentary work habits and poor dietary practices, are of paramount concern. The issue transcends borders and age demographics, with developing nations experiencing a disproportionately rapid surge in incidence. Alarmingly, nearly half of all chronic disease-related deaths occur in individuals under 70 years of age. Despite the looming crisis, a mere 3% of health expenditure in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries is allocated to prevention and public health. Recognizing this shortfall, both business leaders and policy analysts advocate for the implementation of workplace wellness programs.

In India, chronic diseases represent a significant public health challenge, comprising more than half of all mortality cases and nearly half of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost. By 2020, two-thirds of all deaths in India were attributed to chronic diseases, with mortality from heart diseases among individuals aged 35-64 years presenting a looming concern. Conditions like diabetic nephropathy and hypertension are poised for a sharp escalation in prevalence. Notably, coronary heart disease and two types of stroke— ischemic stroke and hemorrhagic stroke— constitute the primary cardiovascular disease burden in India.

The nation is anticipated to witness a higher number of deaths among individuals aged 35-64 than the cumulative toll in the United States, China, and Russia between 2000 and 2030. With globalization and urbanization converging in India, chronic diseases are assuming critical significance, necessitating concerted efforts from both the corporate sector and government to combat the burgeoning crisis. Chronic disease prevalence underscores its economic ramifications, necessitating robust public-policy interventions across society's strata. While cost-effective interventions hold promise, gaps persist in understanding their economic implications and cost-effectiveness, especially in developing nations like India. Historically, India's public health focus gravitated towards infectious diseases, but the imperative to address chronic diseases, projected to account for 66% of all deaths by 2020, has prompted a paradigm shift. Collaboration between the government, civil society, and private entities is envisaged to thwart the escalating burden of chronic diseases and safeguard livelihoods.

The escalating burden of chronic diseases has underscored the pivotal role of workplace wellness programs. Several factors highlight their significance:

1. The Workplace as a Prevention Hub: With individuals spending a significant portion of their time at work, employers wield considerable influence in promoting healthy behaviors and leveraging existing infrastructure to deliver cost-effective interventions.

2. Economic Implications: Chronic diseases not only entail direct healthcare costs but also precipitate financial strain on households. Workplace wellness programs offer a strategic avenue to mitigate medical expenses and enhance financial resilience among employees.

3. Shifting Corporate Priorities: Indian corporations are increasingly prioritizing work-life balance and employee well-being, recognizing the intrinsic link between a healthy workforce and organizational success.

4. Tangible Benefits: Workplace wellness programs yield tangible dividends, including enhanced productivity, improved employee retention, and a positive organizational culture conducive to talent attraction.

To effectively combat chronic diseases through workplace wellness initiatives, a comprehensive approach is imperative, encompassing:

- Leadership: Senior management engagement is crucial, spearheading a culture that prioritizes employee well-being.
- Culture: Fostering a supportive environment that nurtures health-promoting behaviors.
- People: Harnessing employee engagement and participation through incentives and targeted interventions.
- Process: Establishing robust evaluation mechanisms to gauge program efficacy and inform iterative improvements.

Effective communication strategies, employee engagement initiatives, leadership involvement, and resource optimization are critical enablers in realizing the full potential of workplace wellness programs. Notably, proactive engagement with external partners and alignment with long-term business objectives augur success.

Empirical evidence underscores the efficacy of workplace wellness programs in driving behavior change and mitigating chronic disease risk factors. Studies reveal a positive correlation between program participation and improvements in physical activity, weight management, and smoking cessation. However, sustained engagement and participation remain challenges, with only a fraction of employees availing themselves of program benefits despite identification of health risks.

Employers and policymakers alike recognize the cost-saving potential and broader societal benefits of workplace wellness initiatives. While federal and state regulations govern the use of monetary incentives in wellness programs, the imperative to invest in preventive measures remains unequivocal. Continuous evaluation and refinement are essential to optimize program outcomes and maximize return on investment.

In conclusion, workplace wellness programs represent a potent tool in combating the escalating burden of chronic diseases, both globally and in India. Strategic leadership, robust program design, and stakeholder collaboration are imperative to harness their full potential in safeguarding public health and fostering economic resilience.



## **METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of wellness programs in multinational corporations (MNCs) and hospitals and propose enhancements. It seeks to gauge MNC employees' satisfaction levels regarding various aspects of wellness initiatives, including the work environment, convenience, health at work, support for women and children, employee education, and external wellness factors. Furthermore, the study delves into the concept of social security, elucidating its role in providing individuals with protection against various risks, with a historical perspective on how societal institutions have historically provided such security.

Regarding the methodology employed for analyzing hospital employees' wellness practices, a mixed-methods approach is adopted. The research commences with an exhaustive literature review on wellness practices within healthcare settings, specifically focusing on hospital employees. Subsequently, a survey is designed and distributed among all hospital staff, encompassing doctors, nurses, support personnel, and administrators. The survey aims to capture insights into the current wellness programs available, employee participation levels, perceived effectiveness, satisfaction rates, and barriers to engagement. An online survey platform is utilized to maintain respondent anonymity and encourage candid responses.

Additionally, focus group discussions are conducted with a representative sample of hospital employees to delve deeper into their experiences and perceptions of wellness practices. These discussions serve as a platform for employees to express their views, share personal anecdotes, and provide suggestions for enhancing existing wellness initiatives. Through this mixed-methods approach, the study aims to offer comprehensive insights into the efficacy of wellness schemes in hospitals and MNCs, paving the way for recommendations to improve employee well-being.

## **RESULTS**

The AHA/ASA has a mission to enhance heart health and reduce the incidence of heart disease and attack through the application of research in real-world settings, as well as through the advancement of care systems and quality initiatives. To achieve this, the organisation has developed clinical practice guidelines, performance measures, and accreditation programs, as well as engaging in initiatives to control costs and optimize outcomes. The AHA/ASA is now considering a recognition program for companies with comprehensive workplace wellness programs (CWWPs) that integrate assessment which focuses on the Life Simple 7 metrics. The AHA/ASA also offer programmes to aid companies in establishing optimal systems and tactics for implementing comprehensive workplace wellness programs (CWWPs). By promoting ideal CVH through prevention, leadership, and setting standards, the AHA/ASA goal is to assist workplaces, employers, employees, and their families in developing healthier lifestyles and preventing heart disease and heart attacks.

To ensure workplace wellness programs (CWWPs) are effective, the AHA/ASA recommends using a workplace wellness index to assess the culture, structure, processes, and outcomes performance of the program, with a particular focus on cardiovascular health (CVH). The index should be based on evidence-based workplace wellness indicators.

To acknowledge companies that excel in promoting a healthy workplace environment, a recognition system with multiple levels of criteria should be implemented, with a category of recognition awards for innovative approaches to improving employee health outcomes. Employers should be provided with toolkits, resources, and other programs to improve their workplace wellness programs. The AHA/ASA should oversee the possible outcomes which were not intended of the recognition initiative and conduct additional studies to evaluate the effectiveness of wellness programs in the workplace. Recognizing companies with exceptional workplace health programs through this CWWP recognition program could motivate efforts to improve health in the workplace and grant public recognition to employers that meet high standards for employee well-being. To expedite progress toward better cardiac health for all, the AHA/ASA suggests implementing a recognition program recognised nationally for wellness at workplace.

This investigation is the most comprehensive evaluation of these programs till now, exploring program involvement, effects, and motivators. It highlights various aspects that require further examination, such as the enduring effects of these programs on health outcomes and expenses, design of programme attributes that are most successful in reaching wellbeing objectives, and the influence on a diverse range of outcomes, including work-related factors and quality of life relating to health. Additionally, it indicates the necessity of comprehending contextual factors that influence program impact and the demographic characteristics of employees that impact decisions concerning program adoption. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the present situation of the wellness programs at the workplace and highlights several areas that require further research.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research represents the most extensive study of workplace programs for wellbeing so far, focusing on participation, outcomes, and incentives. It includes a literary review, a nationwide survey of employers, studies, and analyses in the form of stats of claims and program data. The results indicate that these programs have become a popular employer-sponsored benefit and are available in approximately 50% of US companies with 50 or more workers, which represent three-quarters of the US labor force. Larger firms tend to offer these programs with a lot more options. Employers view wellness programs as a long-term approach to manage healthcare costs and guarantee the affordability of health coverage, but their effectiveness is often unexamined.

The study found that these programs can have positive impact on reducing factors of risk like smoking along with promoting great behaviours health wise like workouts. This is important because it can help reduce the incidence of diseases related to living style, which are the most important reason of price of healthcare and premature deaths in US. However, the study's estimate of the program's impact on healthcare costs is lesser than most examined in the study. While the study did not find a significant reduction in healthcare costs, the trends in cost and use of high-cost care for program participants and non-participants diverged over time, suggesting a potential reduction in costs if employees continued to participate in the program.

It is important to note that the findings may be affected by response bias as there were significant differences between respondents and non-respondents. Additionally, the generalizability of the outcomes judged on the CCA data may be limited since the base of their data only includes employers that have a long-standing commitment to wellness programs. Furthermore, as the study design was non-experimental, it's possible that differences between individuals who participated in the program and those who didn't, which couldn't be observed, may have affected the findings. For example, participants might have been more motivated to make positive health behaviour changes such as quitting smoking or increasing exercise. The outcomes related to the effect of incentives on wellness program involvement, health behaviours, and outcomes should be approached with caution since the usage of incentives among the employers in the CCA database had limited variation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the project on the wellness practices of hospital employees, there are several recommendations for implementing effective wellness practices in hospitals:

1. Develop a comprehensive wellness program: Hospitals should consider implementing a wellness program that encompasses various dimensions of wellness, such as physical, emotional, and social health. This program should include initiatives such as healthy eating programs, stress management classes, exercise classes, and mental health resources.
2. Encourage employee participation: To increase engagement, hospitals should encourage employee participation by making wellness programs easily accessible and promoting them through various communication channels. Providing incentives for participation, such as discounts on health insurance premiums or gift cards, can also be effective in motivating employees.
3. Create a supportive environment: Hospitals should foster a supportive environment that encourages and enables healthy behaviours. This can be achieved by offering healthy food options in cafeterias and vending machines, providing standing desks or exercise equipment, and promoting physical activity breaks during work hours.
4. Foster a culture of wellness: Hospital leaders should promote a culture of wellness by modelling healthy behaviours and creating a supportive environment. Encouraging teamwork and camaraderie through wellness initiatives can also foster a sense of community and support among employees.
5. Evaluate and adjust the program: It is important for hospitals to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of their wellness programs and make adjustments as needed. This can be done through employee feedback surveys or tracking health outcomes and program participation rates over time. By implementing these recommendations, hospitals can create a workplace culture that supports and promotes employee wellness, leading to healthier and happier employees and potentially reducing healthcare costs in the long term.

## **KEY LEARNINGS**

Some key learnings from a project on the wellness practices of hospital employees may include:

**Importance of leadership support:** Leadership support and involvement is critical in promoting wellness practices among employees.

**Variety of wellness programs:** Offering a variety of wellness programs that cater to different interests and needs of employees is important to increase engagement and participation.

**Encouraging social support:** Encouraging social support among employees, such as buddy systems or team challenges, can enhance motivation and accountability for wellness practices.

**Education and communication:** Education and communication regarding the benefits and opportunities of wellness practices are important to increase awareness and participation.

**Environmental factors:** Modifying environmental factors such as availability of healthy food options and ergonomic workspaces can encourage healthy behaviours.

Based on these learnings, some recommendations for wellness practices in hospitals may include:

**Engage leadership:** Hospital leaders should prioritize and promote wellness practices, providing support and resources to implement effective programs.

**Variety of programs:** Offer a range of wellness programs, such as physical activity challenges, healthy eating initiatives, mental health resources, and stress management programs.

**Encourage social support:** Foster social connections among employees, such as organizing wellness events, providing group exercise classes, and encouraging team challenges.

**Communication and education:** Increase awareness and knowledge about wellness practices through educational programs, newsletters, and other communication methods.

**Environmental factors:** Assess and modify environmental factors to promote healthy behaviours, such as providing healthy food options in cafeterias and vending machines, creating walking paths and standing workstations, and promoting proper ergonomics in workspaces.

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