

# Multiyear workplace health promotion program shown to prevent health risks

March 12 2021

---



Multiyear preventive actions at workplaces can slow down the increase in health risks for working-age people. Photo: 4event Oy / Tuomas Vuorio

A multiyear workplace health promotion program can slow down the increase in health risks for working-age people. A study by the Faculty

of Sport and Health Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä followed what kind of changes happened among participants during an eight-year workplace health promotion program in smoking, minor exercise, high blood pressure, musculoskeletal disorders, and overweight. The results of the study were encouraging for health promotion.

According to earlier studies, a high number of health risks are connected to an increase in occupational health care costs, lower productivity at work, and the growing number of sickness absences. Multiyear preventive actions at workplaces have not yet been studied much, and no research results have previously been available for studying which changes in health risks can be achieved during several years of intervention.

"Earlier studies have indicated that prevention is possible, but most of the studied programs have lasted only from one to three years," states Antti Äikäs, a doctoral student at the University of Jyväskylä. "Our research showed that in the long run we can prevent people in the low- or moderate-level risk groups from transitioning into the group of high-level health risks."

According to the research results, the study group had fewer health risks than average Finnish working-age people. The health risk assessments showed that 50–60% of the male-dominated personnel were categorized to the low-level health risk group (0–1 risks), 30–35% to the moderate-level group (2–3 risks), and 9–11% to the high-level health risk group (more than four risks).

The study also compared changes between low-, moderate- and high-risk groups during the multiyear health promotion program, and found that most of the personnel remained at the same level, 13–15% improved their rating, while the rating deteriorated for only 12–21%.

## Impacts of aging were delayed

Health risks tend to get more common as people age. However, this study showed no statistically significant growth in the total number of health risks in the target population.

"Our research team detected improvements as well as deterioration among the participants, which means that the overall change was minimal," Äikäs notes. "The results are encouraging for maintaining working ability and enhancing national health."

The study examined a multiyear workplace health promotion program that was carried out by a Finnish forest corporation (N = 523–651) and a Finnish wellness company 4event Ltd from 2010 to 2017. The average age of the participants was 43.8 years. Over 120 separate services were performed around Finland during the [program](#). During the first four years, the services were focused to support the lifestyle change of the employees, and the last four years were focused on mental resources and workplace atmosphere. The incidence of health risks was surveyed through three different [health](#) risk assessments by carrying out physiological measurements and questionnaires in 2010–2011, 2013–2014, and 2016–2017.

**More information:** Antti Äikäs et al. Eight-Year Health Risks Trend Analysis of a Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion Program, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (2020). [DOI: 10.3390/ijerph17249426](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17249426)

Provided by University of Jyväskylä

Citation: Multiyear workplace health promotion program shown to prevent health risks (2021, March 12) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-multiyear-workplace-health-shown.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.