

Good practice in risk assessment and developing measures against work related stress in Germany

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Situation since 1996

- Health and Safety at Work Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz): Implementation of Directive 89/391/EEC
- Risk assessment including all risks
- Outstanding regulations on employees participation regarding OSH

But:

- Very few risk assessments include psychosocial risk factors
- Issue has not been relevant for unions
- OSH representatives and experts: technical education (engineers, doctors), they did not recognize psychosocial risk factors as significant for workers' health.

Origins of change

- Concept „Gute Arbeit“ (Good Work): What makes work humane?
- DGB-Index „Gute Arbeit“, regular survey among workers in Germany
- Union activities, such as www.verdi-gute-arbeit.de
- IG Metall-initiative „Anti-Stress-Regulation“
- Initiative of all federal states „Regulation for the prevention of risk factors concerning psychosocial strain at work“ (Verordnung zum Schutz vor Gefährdungen durch psychische Belastung bei der Arbeit)
- Skills shortage by demographic change
- Result 2013: psychosocial risk factors explicitly mentioned in ArbSchG (Health and Safety at Work Act)
- Significantly rising awareness: psychosocial risk factors must be considered

Gemeinsame Deutsche Arbeitsschutzstrategie (GDA), Concerted German Strategie on OSH

- Coordination of federal government, federal state inspectorates, accident insurance institutions, employers organizations and unions
- Definition of common Tasks like: PSYCHE (among 2 others)
- Adoption of common guidelines for risk assessments and psychosocial risk factors
- Instruction of the whole supervisory staff
- Coordinated and improved practice of supervision

Good (?) practice: Hospital ward

- Previously long history of argument
- Arbitration committee finds agreement on procedure
- Interviews with 25 % of employees
- Group discussion with the interviewees for verification of the results of risk assessment and suggestions for measures
 - As Support measures for the relatives
- Report for employer and work council
- Only partly subsequent consideration or implementation
- Arrested dialog and development

Good practice: Behörde für Gesundheit und Verbraucherschutz (Ministry for Health and Consumer Protection)

- Joint steering committee, high commitment of minister („senator“), chairwoman of work council as project director
- Application of DGB-Index „Gute Arbeit“
- Online survey with all employees
- Group discussions in all departments: (1) Better understanding of problems (2) Development of measures
- Planned implementation such as measures for better and easier communication
- Obligatory monitoring of implementation

Obstacles

- Still missing obligation
- Missing capacity:
 - Steering of complex processes
 - Deployment of external experts (consultants)
 - Measures that really change the working conditions
- Extensive market sales potential for consultants, quiet unordered situation: Courses against stress and for resilience still sell best!

- Anlaufstelle „psychische Gesundheit und Beschäftigungsfähigkeit“ (Advisory Board for Psychic Health and Employability) in Hamburg
- Expert groups criticise: Not enough therapists, employees need support before they need therapy
- Survey by Hamburg inspectorate: That's right, and responsible people in organisations need advice how to assess psychosocial risk factors and to make measures
- Development of a concept and call for tenders
- Arbeit & Gesundheit e.V. chosen to perform the advisory board
- Starting at 1.1.2016 with 2,5 workers:
 - Orientation
 - Transmission to others
 - Networking