

Title : Need for workplace health promotion for Savitribai Phule Pune University employees: A social responsibility

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Introduction:

Employees well being at work place has been emphasised by WHO, as it promotes healthy, safe and productive working life. Social responsibility in the University environment provides stewardship and ensures improved quality of life of the employees.

Objective:

To assess the health, nutritional status and physical fitness of employees of Savitribai Phule Pune University.

Methodology:

- Study design: Cross sectional
- Study setting: Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Maharashtra
- Sample: One tenth (N= 175) of the university employees, above 25 years of age, were enrolled for a health and nutritional screening through a health audit.
- Ethics: Participants consent to enroll in this audit was obtained before recruitment.
- Screening: An expert panel that consisted of a physician, fitness expert and a nutritionist screened the participants. Anthropometric measurements such as height, weight, waist circumference were recorded and BMI was calculated. Fitness assessments included breath holding capacity and flexibility measurements. Clinical assessments included measurement of blood pressure, estimation of blood sugar levels (fasting and postprandial), lipid profile and hemoglobin levels. A 24-hour diet recall was used to assess the nutrient intake of the employees. Dietary information on the number of meals consumed, food habits and oil intake per month were elicited.

Results:

Almost one third of the participants i.e, 35% and 30% respectively were overweight or obese. About 80% men and women had waist circumference above normal. Health assessment indicated that about one-half of the participants (48.7%) reported of degenerative ailments. Fasting BSL revealed 20% of the participants to be prediabetic. High LDL level in 22.5% in all and low HDL in 42% men are indicative of high CVD risk. Nearly 25% were screened to be hypertensive; of these, nine had a previous history. Anemia was observed in 19% of the employees. Fitness assessment identified >95% of participants had breath holding capacity less than 45 seconds and > 60% had poor flexibility. Dietary assessment indicated high intake of dietary fat in > 50% and occasional intake of salads and fruits by >70% of the participants.

Recommendation:

High risk of non-communicable diseases has been identified among University employees. Immediate intervention in the form of structured physical activity at the university premises and dietary counselling may be a first step towards preventing disease and improving health.