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Work-Related Stress in Healthcare

Problem based learning report

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is nowadays a part of every employed person. To a certain extent it can motivate people, encourage them and has a beneficial impact on them. If the challenges of everyday life become too big and insurmountable, they can lead to stressful situations, which may be manifested in people's life and work. It is important to identify its causes, to face them and consequently control them. In our research we will find out what kind of a relationship the dentists and dental technicians have to their work, how often are they exposed to stress, what are the causes of stress in their workplace, what impact stress has on their health, life and work, how they overcome stress and how the organization helps them with that.

In the theoretical part of this report, we will first describe what stress is, where the word itself comes from, and how it is defined by some authors. Then two types of stress will be described, ie. positive stress or eustres and negative stress or distress. Next it will be a chapter on stress in the work environment since this is a big problem today. Furthermore, we will be interested in what hinders us at work, what the sources of stress are, which factors cause stress and what the consequences of stress are, which, according to Sonja Treven, have a physiological, psychological and behavioral origin. In the last section of our theoretical part we will explore the ways of tackling and overcoming stress which may take place at an individual level or at the level of the organization. Beside that we will list different strategies and programs for reducing stress of employees.

In the empirical part we will examine stress in healthcare. We chose this problem because we were able to obtain information from the pediatric dental clinic in Murska Sobota. There we carried out a survey among dentists and dental technicians. Healthcare is very important in people's life; therefore stress in healthcare can bring harm to all population.

1. WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is an alarm situation. To individual it helps to prepare mentally and physically to cope with the responsibility. This person adapts oneself to this situation and tackles it consequently (when human's body is mentally or physically attacked, it prepares several defense mechanisms, which are the same for each type of stimulus). This burden can be of external or internal origin. However, everyone reacts to stress differently.

Stress is always carried out in three phases. The first phase, called an alarm phase, prepares an individual for the action. The second stage, called a resistant phase, is adaptation to stress. However, if the stress is acting on, it leads to tiredness and to the third stage, called a phase of exhaustion (Rakovec-Felser 1991).

The word itself is derived from English. Originally it was used in physics and it meant an external pressure, tension, load of an object (Newhouse and Treven, 2005), but the term stress was introduced in medicine in 1949 by Canadian endocrinologist Hans Selye. To him, stress is described as the body's adjustment to new circumstances, and the body's stereotypical and non-specific response to environmental stimuli that disrupt a personal balance, and is described also as a psychosomatic mechanism to regulate and balance the tensions, which means the perception and preparation of the body to the specific loads (Luban-Plozza and Pozzi 1994; Schmidt 2001).

"Stress can be defined as the disparity between comprehension of the requirements on one side and our ability to cope with this demand on the other side." (Looker and Gregson in Ivanko and Stare 2007, 224). Looker and Gregson in words of Ivanko and Stare show that with a simplified model called "balance of stress". "Balance" of a person is in balance when he or she believes that he/she is qualified enough to make a stand against requirements effectively. However, when the "balance" tips on one or the other side, harmful or friendly stress starts to predominate.

2. TWO TYPES OF STRESS:

2.1 POSITIVE – FRIENDLY STRESS (EUSTRESS)

Stress is an individual experience. What someone perceives as a threat or a danger, someone else can perceive it as a challenge or motivation; therefore stress may not be necessarily an unpleasant phenomenon (Ivanko in Stare 2007).

This so called positive stress has a good influence on human in terms of physical and mental ability. Human's abilities to control stress are bigger than requirements; therefore he/she is in a positive state of preparation. He/she feels mentally and physically able to cope with the requirements and is also confident and strong enough to control tasks more easily (Looker and Gregson in Grbić 2007).

2.2 NEGATIVE – HARMFUL STRESS (DISTRESS)

Negative stress could be also described as burning out. It is the decay of values, dignity, spirit and will; in short it is the decay of human soul (Ivanko and Stare 2007). "When the requirements start accumulating and causing anxiety, we will not be equal to them easily, so we must value our abilities carefully. If we judge that requirements exceed our abilities to control, it may lead to the harmful – negative stress." (Ivanko and Stare 2007, 226). Negative stress occurs when human's requirements are bigger than his/her abilities. An individual feels threatened because of the troubles, problems or obstacles that arise.

The term stress describes negative factors of stress clinically. In practice, therefore, it has a negative tone. When talking about distress, the organism responds pathologically with negative effects and can not adapt oneself to tiring agents and different external pressures (Luban-Plozza and Pozzi 1994).

When people are confronted with the opportunity or threat which they perceive as important, or experience it as they will not be able to deal with it effectively, then they feel stressed. The opportunity benefits the individual potentially, but the threat causes him harm.

3. STRESS IN THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

“Every profession is not equally stressful. Many problems occur mainly because of the nature of work, rather than because of the organization of work. In some areas of profession, such as in medicine, police and judiciary, teaching, social work, acting and advertising, there are existent pressures in general” (Battison 1999, 40).

People spend more and more time at work, therefore the leaders of organizations should identify and prevent stress among employees. Today's working environment is very cold and demanding in economical and psychological context. People are emotionally, physically and spiritually exhausted. There is less and less joy within success among people. In organizations the increasing trend of reducing the number of employees means more work for the employed at each workplace. On the other hand, there is more and more bureaucracy, which also produces a bigger extent of work. Because someone must do all this work, an employee, who is responsible for it, is more and more subjected to stress, which he or she is not even aware of until he/she is seriously ill. These people often think that these are only temporary problems which can be removed with a short rest, but they are wrong. The most frequent consequences are psychical, where the individual loses his intellectual ability to work. It is worth mentioning the stress that lasts a long time (several years) with short breaks. That means that human never think freely without the burden and resistance, or the problem that always occurs around him/her (Ivanko and Stare 2007).

But stress in itself is not a problem of present time. The problem of our time is only in the case of increased power, frequency, diversity, appearance and repetition of the pressures that lead body in the state of readiness, which can be fatal to a human (Ivanko and Stare 2007).

It happens that managers often do not cope with the stress of their employees. They are afraid that if they acknowledge the stress in the workplace, employees will demand reduction of their workloads, better working conditions, etc. They believe that stress does not belong among the obligations of employers, nor are sure that the anti-stress action, even if they have money, time and knowledge will bring them success. In the case of the problem of an individual, the solution is in his/her hands. The organization does not see how stress can affect the actual success of the organization, so the fact that individual employees are suffering from the stress in the workplace is not a cause for alarm for the organization.

However, stress in the workplace can cause huge financial losses and reduce profitability. Stress is therefore a problem of the organization as a whole and not just of an individual (Ivanko and Stare 2007).

Actions against stress in the workplace improve the organization. The organization that supports the employee's connection with work is more powerful. Such an organization is also more capable of responding to customer's needs, and grows intensively (Ivanko and Stare 2007).

4. FACTORS OF STRESS

Ivanko and Stare (2007, 232) divided the factors of stress which can have an effect on people into the following groups: external environment, organizational structure and culture, characteristics of work and relations in organization, personality factors, and circumstances at home.

Organizational structure can be an important factor in this because stress occurs on all working levels because of "the hierarchy of positions and scope of competences and responsibilities" (Ivanko and Stare 2007, 232). Those on higher positions have been exposed to stress the most, because making demanding decisions fits in with most stressful conditions.

The division of stress factors are given according to Treven (2005, 20) by first describing the factors in the working environment, then the factors outside of the working environment and at last individual differences, which have different influences on human response to factors of stress their successfulness of controlling them.

The working environment, depending on organization and accomplishing certain deeds can be very stressful. Employees have been exposed to bigger or smaller stressful loads, depending on what kind of a job they have been doing. For example, there are listed professions such as firefighter, manager, surgeon and others, as being very stressful professions. On the other side, for instance insurance agent and accountant are much less stressful jobs. In Treven (2005, 21-22), Shaw and Riskind mentioned six very important factors that effect on the degree of stress at individual occupations. These are decision-making, where managers are exposed to stress; permanent supervising of devices or material;

constant exchanging information with others; unpleasant working circumstances, such as dirty or dangerous environment; and performing unstructured tasks and working with people.

Treven (2005, 22) mentioned demarcation between work and off-work as the second factor. The biggest problem here is the ambivalence between work and family obligations. Conflict of the role of an employee in the working environment speaks about effectiveness of the employee if he evidently knows what is expected from him. A similar factor is uncertainty of the role when the employee is uncertain about his responsibility, that is, if job description is not accurate enough or if his superior's instructions are not defined enough.

The next factor that Treven (2005, 24) mentions is a workload that is too extensive or not extensive enough for an employee, because both conditions are caused by stress. Another factor is the responsibility to other employees, which presents a very heavy workload that mainly affects executives and managers (McLean in Treven 2005, 25).

The stress of the organizational factors is connected to organizational level, organizational complexity, organizational changes and organizational boundary submissions. Also mentioned is harassment and violence in the workplace, which arises especially because of the abuse of power, and also because of working circumstances which can be inappropriate or even dangerous and in this way function as factors of stress.

As already mentioned the events outside of the working environment are also often causing stress. "Those occur in the environment where the employee lives: circumstances in family, relations with friends, and environment where he spends his free time" (Brejc in Ivanko and Stare 2007, 233). "Because stress usually doesn't stop right after happening, a person brings it to his or her workplace" (Treven 2005, 30). These factors can be divided in two groups, namely as stressful life events and efforts of everyday life.

Individual differences between individuals fit in the third group of factors of stress, because some people are more successful at confronting stressful situations than others. "Personality characteristics have a strong influence on individual's ability to fight with different pressures and stimuli. Those features are: temperament, character, instinct and other specific abilities" (Ivanko and Stare 2007, 233).

5. THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

Možina (1994, 661) linked stress to a variety of negative effects which show the various signs and symptoms. According to Selye (Treven 2005, 43), stress cannot always be seen as something negative. It has two sides—positive and negative—because on one hand, it may increase the workload fervor, encourages creativity and activities, while on the other hand it can overburden and destroy people's physiological and mental system. The consequences are reflected in disease state, dissatisfaction, unethical behavior, errors, reduced operation and absence from work.

The consequences may therefore, by the standard division by Treven (2005, 44) and Ivanka and Stare (2007, 227), be divided into physiological, psychological and behavioral categories.

“He or she can feel the symptoms of stress throughout the body” (Battison 1999: 14). They are called physiological symptoms and they form in “circumstances where people need to deal with major requirements which they are barely able to meet” (Treven 2005: 45). Many of the physiological signs of stress are: heart disease, problems with the spine, ulcer, headache, cancer, skin diseases, high blood pressure, flushing, disturbances in breathing, sweating, constipation... (Treven 2005: 45-50, Možina 1994: 662, Battison 1999: 14-15). Miš (Ivanko and Old, 2007: 229) defined these physiological changes as visible symptoms of stress. The following most common indicators of stress are internal, which are: aggression, regression, fiction, resignation, compensation, rationalization, trivialization of acts, projection, fantasy, and repression.

“The consequences of prolonged stress can lead people to a position in which many mental or psychological symptoms may occur” (Battison 1999: 16). These are family problems, where coordination between work and family leads to stress; insomnia because by shift work, because powder normal sleep rhythm, impotence, depression, phobias, nightmares, burn syndrome, lack of concentration, feeling of loneliness, less ability to take decisions, the feeling of inadequacy and incompetence, a feeling of lack of time, intolerance, ... (Treven 2005: 50-56, Battison 1999: 16, Schmidt 2001: 21).

“Psychological consequences of stress are closely related to behavioral responses to stress” (Cooper and others in Treven 2005: 50), which fall into the third category of effects of stress, where individuals experience changes in behavior, such as frequency of smoking,

consumption of large quantities of alcohol and drugs, changes in diet, increased susceptibility to accidents, problems with movement, and others. “Stress behavior is therefore reflected in poor working habits, the demolition of their mutual relations, absenteeism and sick leave” (Ivanko and Old 2007:227).

6. MANAGEMENT AND OVERCOMING STRESS

We live in a society full of changes that are present in our lives. These changes make an impact on us and almost always causing stress. That is why it is important to find the answer to the question of how to make it easier to work and also why people are so eager to find ways to cope with stress and eventually defeat it.

6.1 INDIVIDUALS OVERCOMING STRESS

“Individual strategies, which are known as the most successful ones, are often physical activity, meditation and other methods of relaxing, healthy life style and time management” (Treven 2005, 61).

When talking about physical activity, people often understand doing some sport activities such as jogging, walking, aerobics, and others. It is important that they do these sports as often as they can, i.e. few times a week, not only while under stress. Improvement can be felt in their well-being and the effect while working suddenly increases. “People who are physically active, are also more lively” (Markham v Treven 2005, 62). So they can also confront their stress and easily defeat it.

To deal with medical conditions connected with stress, doctors often recommend using meditation because it helps to improve our body stage. Meditation helps people to relax completely, improves their inner balance and helps to see their problems a lot more optimistically.

Healthy way of living is also very important for conquering stress. Meanwhile it has to be thought about eating and drinking enough of liquid. While working, it is important that employees take some time for themselves, for example drinking coffee, maybe smoking a cigarette. Also it should not be forgotten about the amount of sleep which is needed to relax the body and prepare it for the new negative situations.

With overcoming and coping stress employees can also help themselves with managing their time. They have to plan the day to have enough time to do everything they want to. For example: their job, family, friends, eating, sleeping... While managing that, it has to be avoided the possible stress impact, and that only comes if it is not succeeded to do what it is started in the first place (Treven 2005, 61-71).

6.2 ORGANIZATIONS OVERCOMING STRESS

“Different organizations help employees to cope with their stress with their strategies to control the factors of stress emerging in the first place, and also with different programs that help containing good well-being with employees” (Treven 2005, 75).

6.2.1 STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING STRESS WITH EMPLOYEES

To successfully overcome stress, we first have to identify the reason why it initially started. When we find it, we have to conquer each and every single one of them. According to Treven (2005, 76) these strategies are: change of working habits, the flexibility of planning it, working on communication skills of managers, creating good organizational sphere, plans and progress of career, and of course good working partnership.

The transformation of work has to do with contentment at work that comes from the employees themselves, i.e. consequently reduce or even remove all signs of stress. The employee has to feel that his work is very important to handle. He has to feel responsible to complete his “mission”; last but not least he has to have the opportunity that his work is graded. Hackman and others (Treven 2005, 80) distinguish five different strategies to shape work and reduce stress in employees. Uniting small tasks into bigger and also more complicated ones, making more genuine working habitats, changing relationships versus clients, vertically distributing obligations, and working on reestablishing the old connections.

“Flexible working time helps the employees to decide for themselves how much work is needed for the job to be done not to surplus prescribed limitations inside the organization” (Treven 2005, 80). That is how they can combine their work with their personal interests. Because of that, people are more motivated, less tired and of course more resistant against stress.

Stress also starts because of the conflicts created among employees, when they are insecure, or when their roles are too demanding or not demanding enough to deal with. If the employee's responsibility is not clearly defined, the employee does not know what his mission is. The organization has to give every individual his role and also make it very clear how it has to be done.

Communication is also very important, vertical as well as horizontal. The more is it lively, the weaker is the stress impact. Inferiors have to be praised from superiors and have to have the feeling of safety and support.

The climate in the organization also has to be favorable. To minimize the stress in this particular area it is used decentralization and Participative decision. Participative decision is also in use because it helps cooperation among employees while accepting decisions. That gives them the feeling of power and control, which also minimizes the stress impact on them.

Planning and development of career also has the same influence on employed people and their stressing situations. Every employee wishes to be promoted, gain self-accomplishment and personal growth. If the employee has all these options at hand, his stress can be a lot smaller, which also means improving benefits of the work that has to be done. The organization has to provide its ideas, because with them the employee completes himself and helps the organization. It is also important, that people do what they like, because every forced and uninteresting work helps increasing their stress. But stress is not only conditioned by bad relationships, but also by bad working relations. To improve these relations, we have to provide enough light, heat, isolate the outer noise, protect the employee from harmful and poisonous substances, provide him everything needed for labor. We give the employees, which work in heavy circumstances, enough pauses, so they can relax. (Treven 2005, 75-92)

6.2.2 THE PROGRAM FOR OVERCOMING STRESS BY EMPLOYEES

A lot of organizations prepare some courses with the intention to teach about stress and how to face with it. These programs are one of the most important and frequent ones. This is how the employees learn how to deal with stress on an individual level. They learn even to defeat it before it develops completely. Employees find out how to help themselves with these programs. They should gain self-confidence, understanding their nature, self-control and abilities to do their job correctly. This is how the whole concern is given the opportunity for

improvement, because when the employees are not so stressed, they can dedicate more to their work.

7. HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is a part of everyday life. A high number of people in need of medical assistance come through hospitals, primary health care centers and private practitioners every day. Thus, health care is not like a store with a part-time, but it is a constant which, by the principle of solidarity, is there to help sick people. Because of its complexity and importance, healthcare is regulated by law and controlled by the Ministry of Health.

The Act on Healthcare says that “in the Republic of Slovenia, medical activities are divided into primary, secondary and tertiary level. Primary services include primary health care and the pharmaceutical activities; secondary services include specialist outpatient clinics and hospital operations; and tertiary services include specialized occupation of clinics and institutes and other authorized health care institutions.” (Vlada Republike Slovenije).

8. METHODOLOGY

Since we had chosen to explore stress in healthcare, we decided that for the empirical part of our research we would visit a medical institution in Murska Sobota. It performs primary health care on the primary level. The Primary Health Care Center in Murska Sobota is composed of several working units but we shall concentrate on the dental clinic which also consists of several departments: paediatric dental dispensaries, general dental clinic, dental technicians and radiology. The superintendent of the Primary Health Care Center oversees each department and every head of the department.

Our group has decided to explore the stress among staff in the paediatric dental clinic, which employs fifteen employees. Fifteen people were conducted in the survey, but there was one person who did not conclude the survey, so the sample for analysis was 14. Six respondents were dentists, other eight were dentist technicians. Twelve were women and two were men between ages 28 and 55.

For analysis we took absolute numbers, because the sample is very small and it is easier for comparison. It is clear that these results cannot be generalized because of such a small and unrepresentative sample.

9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout our study we sought to answer the question of whether employees in healthcare are under the influence of stress. Although the respondents do not think that they have an uninteresting work, stressful situations that come along with employment and jobs still occur.

It is seen that stress varies between dentists and dental technicians. The analysis of the survey has shown that dental technicians are more stressed than dentists, because 6 of 8 dental technicians are occasionally under stress, when there are only 3 of 6 dentists occasionally under stress. There is also one dental technician which feels that he is always under work stress, when on the other side there is one dentist which feels that he is never or rarely under stress. We think this is because of the nature of the work. Dental technicians deal with the bureaucratic work, with ordering and accepting patients, and also with assisting dentists. Dentists, however, engage in work directly related to the health of the patient. From this we see that it is not the problem the work itself but what is related with dental work.

As seen from the data, the causes for these stressful situations are influence of mobbing for 3 dental technicians, disorderly relations in organization for 2 dental technicians, and patients and their attitude for 2 dental technicians. The last factor is not surprising, since working with human beings is never easy, especially if these people are sick. We were more surprised by the other two factors. By definition, mobbing is

“a conflicting communication in the workplace between colleagues or between subordinates and superiors, where the attacked person is in the subordinate position and is exposed to a systematic and long-lasting attack by one or more individuals for the purpose of exclusion from the organization, and in result, this attacked person feels it as a discriminatory offense.” (Leymann 1996, 21)

According to Treven (2005, 27), the violence in the workplace includes rude behavior, and physical and verbal violence. Mobbing is most common in service activities, so it is not surprising that nurses and other healthcare specialists are one of the most exposed. From this we conclude that good relations cannot exist within the organization where mobbing is performed.

From the data it is also seen that 4 of 6 dentists have indicated that the most common cause of stress in the workplace is a fast work tempo and an excessive amount of work. It is well known about a shortage of dentists in health care. Therefore, the number of patients per dental practitioner is constantly increasing, which prolongs the waiting period. Dentists already know how many patients they can process in one day and they leave some room for the patients which have no appointment. So they order as many patients as they can to maximize and efficiently use their abilities. Since it is required of them to be better than this, stressful situations occur, which then negatively affect the work. Patients, who are not tolerant and do not want to understand the situation of the lack of dentists, are also problematic. The dentists are aware of that, since 2 of them had indicated patients and their attitude as the stressful situation which occurs very commonly.

Negative stress causes undesirable effects on the psychological, physiological and behavioral level. That means that it affects human health. It is therefore not surprising that 12 of 14 respondents identified stress as a factor that sometimes has a negative impact on their health and even on life itself. Namely, it is difficult to completely separate work and private life. Thus, stressful situations that occur at work, do not stay in the workplace, but may be brought into private life.

The analysis of the survey has also shown that 7 respondents believe that stress does not affect their work, as they rarely or never remain absent or less productive. However, there are 4 respondents, affected by stress to the extent that they are less productive. One person has even replied that stress always impacts on his or her work.

It is necessary to find solutions for all the undesirable consequences, so that employees can be good and effective employees in the organization. Outside the organization, 7 employees take care of their psychological relaxation by spending time with friends, which is common because people are social beings and we work through the help from others better than solely alone. 5 members of the staff are also fighting off stress with recreation and sport, and Treven observes that “favorable effects of a regular physical activity are reflected not only in a better state of health or a greater ability to overcome stress, but also in decisions and improving the quality of work.” (Treven 2005, 61) Some respondents, however, are psychically relaxing with meditation, which, according to Traven (2005, 62), does not eliminate problems, but

allows them to view these problems from another angle, and also increase creativity, concentration and efficiency.

Managing stress differs between the workplace and outside it. 8 of 14 employees manage stress in the workplace by taking a break, or they relax and do the task again. They try to adjust their tasks according to their current capabilities so they can continue working normally. Some employees are trying to avoid stressful situations in advance, so they only set such tasks and goals that they can accomplish. Planning is certainly an important part of work. Thus, dentists and dental technicians schedule as many patients as they think they can manage to process and still keep their efficiency and productiveness at maximum. The problem is with patients who are in great pains, but do not have an appointment. They break the appointments schedule and also increase the amount of work per day. 3 employees manage stressful situations in the workplace by conversing with superiors. Obviously, some still believe in the organization and trust their superior, who might be able to help.

This is actually a confirmation of our second hypothesis; we feel that, despite the stressful situations in the workplace, employees are able to cope with it.

From the data it is seen that the organization takes care of the welfare of their employees with group outings and picnics every year. Such was the answer of 7 employees. This is a good method; the collective is more connected since ultimately everybody depends on one another. For example, if a certain dental technician gets sick, the dentist must work with another dental technician. This is why it is crucial that they are socially connected. 3 respondents see that the organization also offers various job trainings in which employees participate, because the materials, equipment, and working methods change over time. 4 respondents, however, replied that the organization does not care about exposure of its employees to stress. This is worrying, because if employees do not feel comfortable in the organization, they cannot give their best in order for organization to work at maximum.

In the end, we asked them how they can avoid the stressful factors in the workplace. Most of them replied very pessimistically, because 6 of them believe that the stress in the workplace cannot be avoided. 3 respondents have an opinion that if there were better relations within the organization, there would be less stress. They offer some solutions, such as lectures about mobbing, and meetings during which they would deal with interpersonal relations and can

talk about their problems between employees and superiors. 2 of them see the solution in the course of the work which should have been more organized, that each patient receives such treatment and time as he or she deserves. 2 employees, however, think they should look for solutions within the organization, which would be more effective if there, were better working conditions (new equipment, bigger ordination) and if they were rewarded for good performance. One feels that some individuals in the collective are old enough to retire, and that younger generations should have an opportunity to bring in some fresh ideas.

CONCLUSION

In this term paper it has been shown how important stress is. Stress can have a major impact on relations in organizations and also on work itself. Because of that, the concept of stress and elimination of it should be symbolized an important guideline towards effectiveness and successfulness in the workplace.

But because each individual in stressful situation responds and also reacts differently, and because the source of stress is not always the content of work or work itself, each individual must also know how to avoid these situations and be able to control them. But stress is not always negative for the individual and is not always causing negative situations, negative mood or in worst cases psychological disorders or even physical illness. A certain level of stress can cause positive mood, challenge or opportunity.

Fast pace of living, constant pressures on healthcare sector, lack of staff and waiting queues are factors that especially affect medical sector, which additionally makes achieving the quality of work more difficult. If organizations and also individuals, in our case in healthcare, contribute to restraining stress, then relationships and communication improves, conflicting situations are reduced, and the quality and amount of successfully completed work increases.

In Europe stress in the workplace is becoming an important problem. According to the report of European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions the sectors at most risk can be identified in healthcare and social services. (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007, 23). So it is not a coincidence that choice for our research had been the Primary Health Care Center in Murska Sobota. It has been found that doctors and medical technicians are pretty much under work stress. There are numerous causes for this, and they vary between dental technicians and dentists. While the dental technicians are more concerned with relations between employees, the doctors are more disturbed with workflow. The research shows that although stress is present in the workplace, it is still managed in different ways. Thus, this means that stress is still manageable to a certain extent.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SURVEY

Pozdravljen/a!

Smo študentke (Anja Huzjak, Maja Hajdinjak, Sabina Bernjak in Sabina Habjan) Fakultete za družbene vede, Univerze v Ljubljani. Pri predmetih Sociologija dela, Trg delovne sile in zaposlovanje ter Angleščina proučujemo pri seminarski nalogi stres na delovnem mestu na področju zdravstvene dejavnosti. Del le-te bi rade namenile konkretni analizi stresa na delovnem mestu, zato vas naprošam, da izpolnite anketni vprašalnik, ki je anonimen in bo uporabljen izključno za namene seminarske naloge, zato prosim, da pri odgovorih podate svoje resnično mnenje, oziroma izberete najbližji odgovor!

Najlepša hvala za sodelovanje!

1. Spol: Ž M

2. Starost: _____

3. Poklic:

- a) zobozdravnik
- b) višja medicinska sestra
- c) zobozdravstveni asistent

4. Dolžina delovne dobe:

- a) 0 - 5 let
- b) 6 – 10 let
- c) 11 – 15 let
- d) 16 – 20 let
- e) več kot 20 let

5. Zdi se mi, da opravljam zanimivo delo:

- a) nikoli oz. redko
- b) občasno
- c) pogosto
- d) vedno

6. Stresne situacije na delovnem mestu doživljam:

- a) nikoli oz. redko
- b) občasno
- c) pogosto
- d) vedno

7. Kateri dejavnik je po vašem mnenju glavni povzročitelj stresa na vašem delovnem mestu:

- a) neurejeni odnosi v organizaciji
- b) prevelika količina dela
- c) slabi delovni pogoji

- d) strah pred izgubo službe
- e) nerazumevanje dela
- f) plača
- g) mobbing oz. nadlegovanje na delovnem mestu
- h) možnost poškodbe pri delu, nastanka bolezni
- i) hiter (napet) tempo dela
- j) stranke (pacienti) in njihov odnos
- k) drugo: _____

8. Stres na delovnem mestu negativno vpliva na moje zdravje (fizično in psihično):

- a) nikoli oz. redko
- b) občasno
- c) pogosto
- d) vedno

9. Stres na delovnem mestu na moje življenje vpliva negativno:

- a) nikoli oz. redko
- b) občasno
- c) pogosto
- d) vedno

10. Stres na delovnem mestu vpliva na samo delo (odsotnost od dela, nizka storilnost...):

- a) nikoli oz. redko
- b) občasno
- c) pogosto
- d) vedno

11. Kako skrbite za psihično sprostitev izven delovnega mesta:

- a) ne skrbim
- b) pomagam si s pomirjevali
- c) šport, rekreacija
- d) druženje s prijatelji
- e) meditacija
- f) drugo: _____

12. Na kakšne načine se spoprijemate s stresnimi obremenitvami na delu:

- a) vzamem si odmor (kava, cigaret)
- b) umirim se in nalogo še enkrat predelam
- c) zastavim si dosegljive naloge in s tem cilje
- d) pogovorim se z nadrejenimi
- e) uporabljam sprostitvene tehnike
- f) obremenitev sprejemem kot izziv
- g) obremenjenost zaradi dela v obliki slabe volje prenašalna družinske člane in prijatelje
- h) obremenjenost zaradi dela v obliki slabe volje prenašam na stranke(paciente)

13. Kako organizacije, v kateri ste zaposleni, skrbi za spoprijemanje s stresom:

- a) imamo proste dneve (koriščenje nadur)
- b) s fleksibilnim delovnim časom in porazdelitvijo dela
- c) s skupinskimi izleti, pikniki
- d) se trudi, da delo ne poteka v negotovosti in skrbi za transparentnost

- e) skrbi za ekonomsko varnost delovnega mesta
- f) zaposlenim nudi usposabljanje za delovno mesto
- g) nagrajuje delovno uspešnost v obliki bonusov, nagrad

14. Kako bi se po vašem mnenju lahko izognili stresnim dejavnikom na vašem delovnem mestu?

Appendix 2: THE ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

There were fifteen people conducted in the survey. One of the surveys was not correctly answered but the rest of the fourteen surveys were suitable for the analysis.

Question 1 and 2: Gender and age

There were twelve women and two men in the age between 28 and 55.

Question 3: Occupation

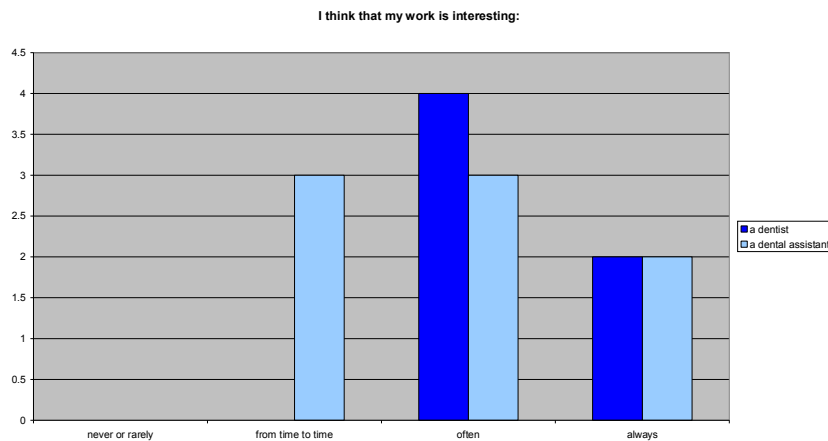
Six interviewees are dentists, other eight are dentist technicians.

Question 4: The length of their job age

The length of their job age is by three dentists from 0 to 5, one dentist works for 16-20 years, two more than 20. Two of dentist technicians are employed for 16-20 years, the rest of six even more than 20 years.

Question 5: I think that my work is interesting.

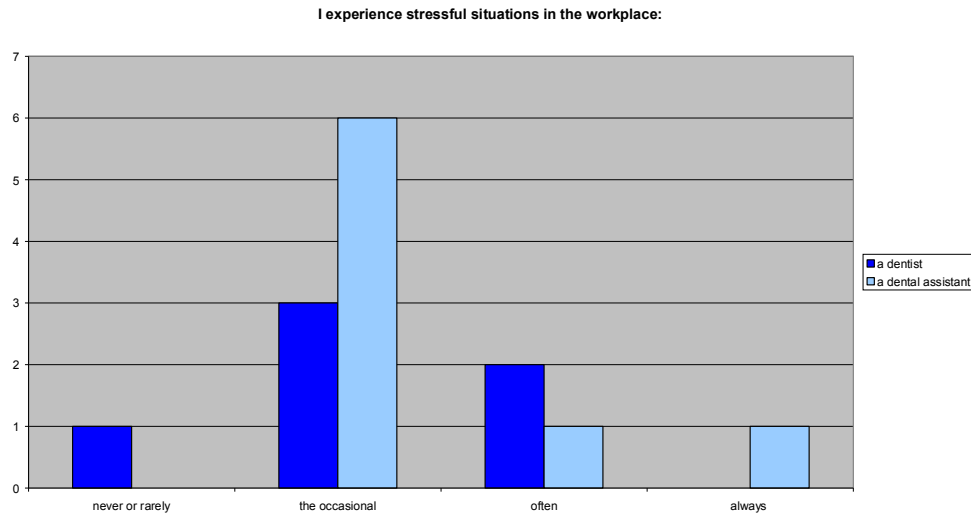
Seven respondents answered often, four always and three of them occasionally.



Graph 1.1

Question 6: I experience stressful situations in the workplace.

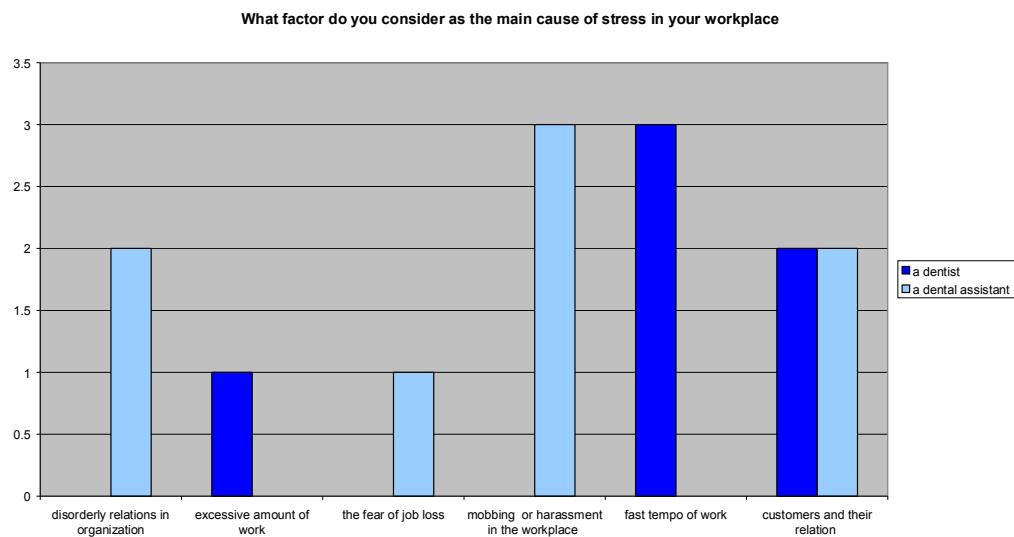
Nine respondents answered that they feel stress in their workplace occasionally, three often, one person never or rarely, and one of them always.



Graph 1.2

Question 7: Which factor do you consider as the main cause of stress in your workplace?

Dentists answered that the main causes for their stress are too much work, swift way of working and patients' attitude. Dental technicians complain about untidy relationships between people in the organization, they fear to lose their jobs; stress causes mobbing–harassment in the workplace. As well as dentists, they are also not satisfied with clients and their attitude.



Graph 1.3

Question 8, 9 and 10:

8: Stress in the workplace adversely affects my health (physical and psychological).

Five dentists claimed that stress occasionally has a negative impact on their health; one of them said that happens often. Most of the dental technicians have the same opinion about an occasionally negative impact, but only one thinks that stress is always negative.

9: Stress in the workplace has a negative impact on my life.

Nine of the respondents claim that stress occasionally impacts negatively on their lives, two of them answered it happens often, and two answered always. One answered never.

10: Stress in the workplace affects my work (the absence of labor, low productivity...).

In seven cases stress does not impact on work, in five occasionally, in one often and in one always.

Question 11: How do you take care of your psychological relaxation outside the workplace?

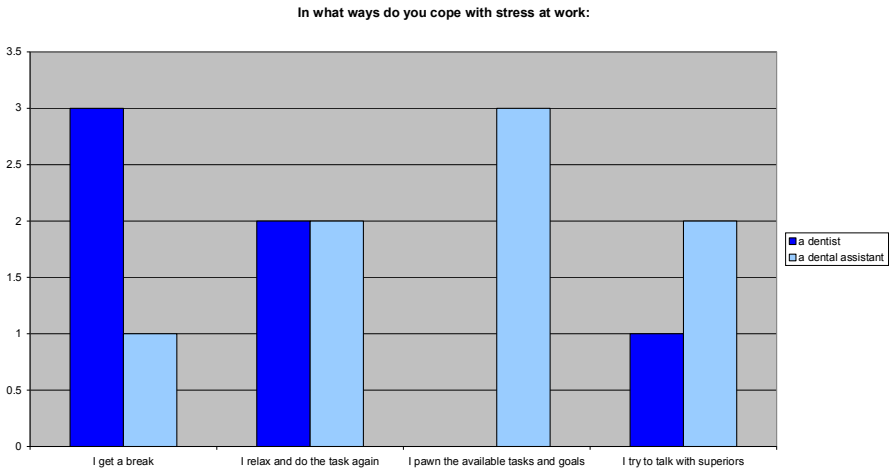
On their individual level employees are dealing with stress by hanging out with their friends, with sport activities, two of them even meditate.



Graph 1.4

Question 12: In what ways do you cope with stress at work?

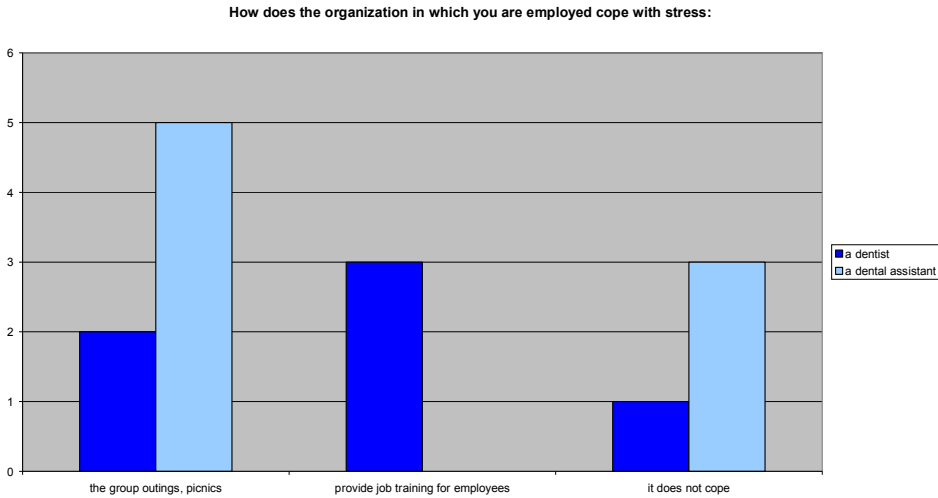
On the organizational level they are overcoming stress by taking a break, to relax themselves and do their task once more, but especially they do not set their goals above their capabilities, in three cases employees deal their problems with their superior who helps them to manage stressful situations.



Graph 1.5

Question 13: How does the organization in which you are employed cope with stress?

To restrain stress, the organization helps them by organizing picnics, group trips and offers the employees to qualify for the working place. Four of employees said, that the organization does not do anything to ease the stress.



Graph 1.6