

# The Connection Between Employee Health and its Affect on the Workplace

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## INTRODUCTION

An individual's health can affect everything they do on a daily basis, including how they perform at work. If one were to come into the office tired, stressed, and feeling under the weather they aren't likely to have a very productive day. Companies are starting to realize the impact an employee's well-being has on their work output. Although only 7% of U.S. companies have a comprehensive health promotion plan, this number is on the rise.<sup>1</sup> Not only could a health plan have an impact on an individual level, but company wide as well. Healthier employees means lower health care costs and hopefully higher profits with the associated increase in overall productivity. The logic makes sense: feel better at work, be a more productive employee. But, is there evidence to support this? And, if so, what should companies do to improve an individual's health?

### Combined Employee Wellness Studies

Study focus	Average sample size		Average duration (years)	Average savings*	Average ROI <sup>b</sup>
	Treatment	Comparison			
Health care costs	3,201	4,547	3.0	\$358	3.27
Absenteeism	2,683	4,782	2.0	\$294	2.73

This figure is based on 22 studies compiled by the Journal on Health Affairs and was completed in 2009. The first focus, health care costs, considers any savings directly related to health care coverage. The second focus, absenteeism, considers costs related to employees "sick days". Note that average savings and ROI are per employee values.

## AIM

The aim of this study is three fold:

- Decide if the employer's actions promoting wellness have been paying off financially
- Understand what health issues should be focused on in a promotion program
- Determine if healthier employees tend to see more success in the corporate world

While research related to health promotion programs have been completed in the past, there hasn't been a study as specific as what I focus on. This study should help employers decide if they want to implement a health promotion program and how they should focus their efforts.

## METHODS

**Data Source:** I worked with a fortune 100 company in the food, health, and wellness industry to collect my data. They allowed me to work with their Human Resource department over a three-month period to ask questions, analyze company biometric data, and communicate with employees across locations and functions. For company and employee privacy they asked that I keep their name private.

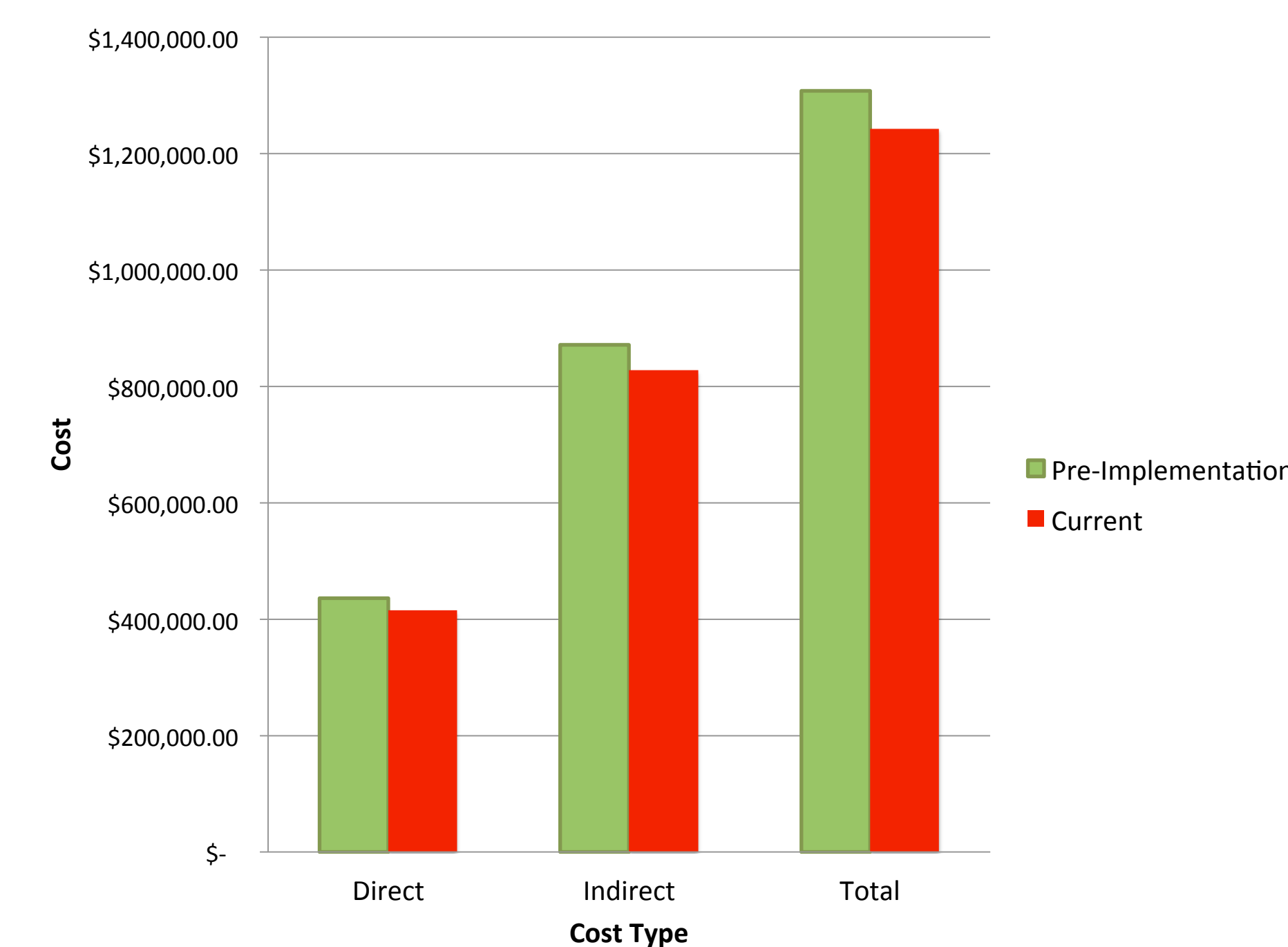
### Steps of Collection:

- Coordinated with the company's health insurance provider to gather biometric data collected on a yearly basis to allow for analysis of tangible medical records
- Created a series of questions that give information related to intangible medical information (i.e. on a 1-10 scale how energetic do you feel at work)

**Analysis:** The analysis of my collected data happened in a three-step process. The first of these three steps was to aggregate the information into a few key documents to allow for manipulation. The second step to this process was converting the raw data to a visual format for ease of interpretation. I did this for each location from which data was received and looked for trends, outliers, and similarities between locations. The third and final step was a second aggregation of data. It was here that I combined information from all locations to interpret overall employee health trends.

## RESULTS

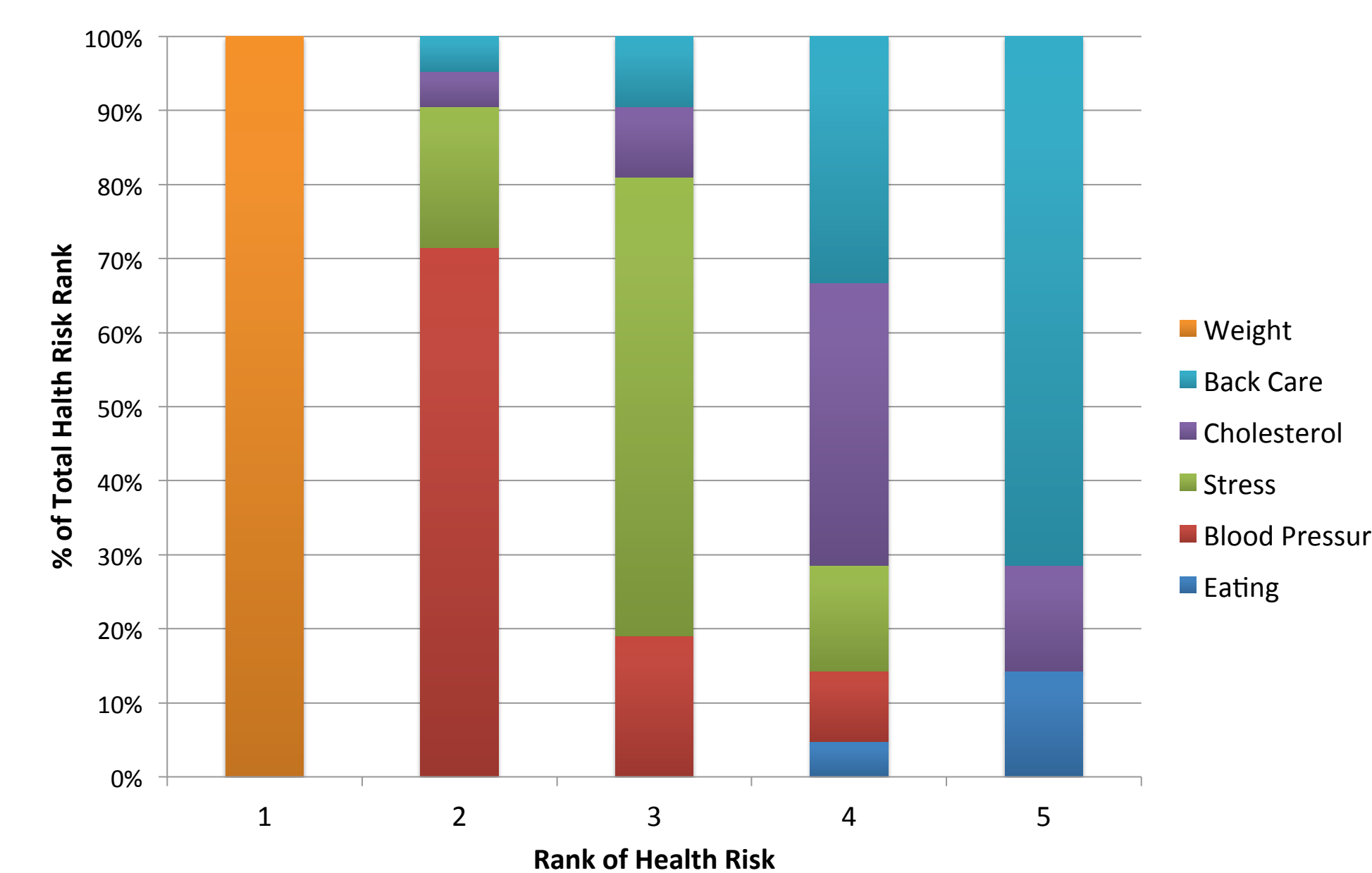
### Avoidable Health Care Costs Across Corporate and Manufacturing Facilities



Direct: actual employee, Indirect: family members, Pre-Implementation: 2015, Current: 2016

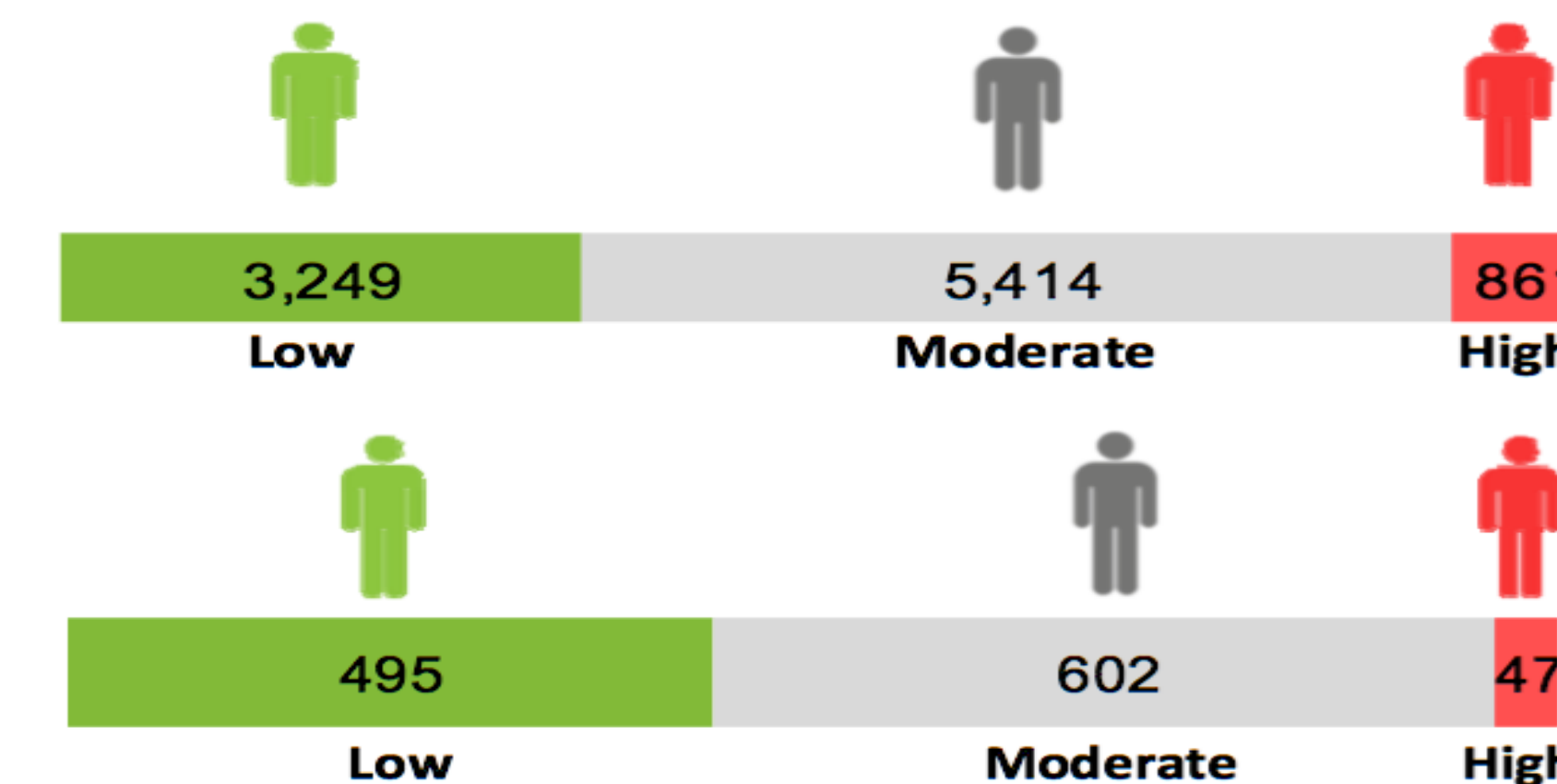
One of the main positive outcomes of this study is that it shows a direct cost savings from the implementation of a wellness program. On average each company site reduced its employees health care costs by \$21,557.

### Health Risk Breakdown Across Corporate and Manufacturing Facilities



The second important finding was the core group of health issues that employees are facing. Weight, blood pressure, and stress were the three highest employee health risks at 77% of locations tested. These points can't be compared to prior data, but it is helpful to know where the company should focus its efforts in the future.

### Health Status Indicators (Top- Manufacturing, Bottom- Corporate)



Health risks include any listed medical condition (i.e. high blood pressure). Low=0-2 health risks, Moderate=3-5 health risks, High=6+ health risks. # of corporate employees= 1,144. # of manufacturing employees= 9,524

My last main objective was to decide if healthier employees are more successful in the work place. The figure above shows that ~9% manufacturing workers are a "high" health risk, while only ~4% of corporate workers have the same label.

## CONCLUSIONS

- It is clear that health promotion programs have an effect on company costs
- There is a core group of health issues that a majority of employees are facing: Weight, Blood Pressure, Stress
- There is evidence to support corporate employees being healthier than manufacturing workers
- Health promotion programs can be very effective if implemented correctly

## FURTHER RESEARCH

- Employees at the company from which I received my data will continue my research. This will allow for a larger sample size of data to show trends and long term effects.
- Understand a more direct correlation between health promotion plans and company profits
- It would be helpful to further understand how common medical issues specifically affect an employees impact at work (i.e. increased levels of stress can take away 30 minutes of productivity per day)

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