

The effectiveness of workplace team sports intervention on employee work, health and well-being

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Introduction: Workplace Physical activity interventions can positively influence employee health and well-being outcomes. However, research to date is yet to comprehensively examine the efficacy of sport and team sport on health outcomes. Participation in workplace team sport has the capacity to improve not only individual health, but also social group and organisational health outcomes. This study evaluated the impact of a workplace team sport intervention. The primary outcome was aerobic fitness (estimated VO₂ max). Secondary outcomes included group cohesion, within-team communication and team job performance.

Methods: Two regional worksites from one large company took part in either the team sport intervention (n = 28) or the control group (n = 20). The intervention consisted of weekly 1-hour team sport sessions for 12 weeks. Measures of aerobic fitness, physical activity, group cohesion, interaction and performance were measured pre- and post-intervention. Data were analysed using a series of mixed ANOVAs.

Results: After 12 weeks, significant improvements were observed in the intervention group in VO₂ max (+ 4.5 ± 5.8 ml/min kg, P < .002), interpersonal communication within teams (+ 3%, P < .042) and mean weekly physical activity duration (+ 154.74', P < .002) in the intervention group.

Discussion: Participation in team sport might be not only be an effective way to improve aerobic fitness and physical activity behaviour of employees, but may also improve interpersonal communication between colleagues, which may in turn impact organisational well-being. Further workplace team sports studies are required that assess other important indicators of health and social wellbeing.

Keywords: workplace health, intervention, physical activity