

Changing the corporate culture to prevent obesity and chronic diseases at workplace

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Issue/problem

In a context of health in all policies, obesity prevention must be considered in various sectors including workplace. This work presents a program aimed to change corporate culture to prevent obesity and chronic diseases in one of the largest public companies in France (155 000 employees), the French National Railways Company (SNCF). Program implementation was based on the best practices for designing sustainable health promotion interventions.

Description of the problem

SNCF stakeholders – occupational health professionals, social action service, communication service, company's management – in collaboration with complementary health insurances, trade unions and SNCF sports associations developed a program built through five drivers for change of the corporate culture: (1) development of public health policy at workplace; (2) involvement of employees and multisectoral cooperation in the construction of health policy; (3) development of supportive environments for healthy behaviours at workplace; (4) development of personal skills at workplace; (5) and involvement of occupational health services in health promotion and prevention.

Results

Results were obtained in five domains: (1) adoption of a public health initiative by the company for 2011–2014; (2) engagement of all company's sectors and employees involvement in a public health intervention; (3) screening for overweight and obesity-related comorbidities at workplace and a multidisciplinary intervention for overweight volunteers; (4) increase in healthy menu options at worksite canteens; (5) and implementation of health promotion activities at workplace.

Lessons

Close collaboration between stakeholders and company's management support are important factors to change corporate culture in order to target the multiple interrelated factors contributing to sustainable healthy behaviors to prevent obesity and chronic diseases at workplace through different levels of intervention.

Key messages

- Obesity prevention at workplace needs to change corporate culture
- Tackling different drivers for change at workplace in order to achieve sustainable health promotion interventions