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**Analysis of declared health behaviors of employees in Poland and their readiness to improve their lifestyle**

**Abstract**

The role of prevention and health promotion is known and ever more appreciated – both at the system level and in the private life of citizens. The development of civilization diseases and the growing costs of medical care, contribute to increasingly important role of the prevention, both in the healthcare systems of many countries as well as in companies and organizations that provide healthcare to their employees. An employee's illness leads to a loss of productivity, thus reducing not only the employer's own income, but also a burden on the social insurance system. More and more companies are involved in providing employees with comprehensive medical care, but also introducing prevention and health promotion in the workplace, which is also expected by the employees themselves. However, these activities are often based on individual initiatives and not every company builds a comprehensive well-being strategy. The studies published so far confirm that in order for these activities to be effective, they should be planned in the long term, be adapted to the current health problems and needs of employees, as well as consist of various tools and communication channels, and involve both employees, co-workers and superiors. Due to a large scale of the working population and its impact on country's economy, employees' health is a significant challenge both for employers and public health.

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to identify and analyze the health behaviors declared by employees in Poland and their readiness to improve their lifestyle along with the factors that may influence these behaviors. The information obtained in this way can be used to support employers in taking better care of their employees' health through a number of wide health initiatives organized by the company, and at the same time expand existing knowledge in the field of health sciences.

The hypothesis put forward in the study for this doctoral dissertation assumes that gender, age, belonging to a given age generation and work in the production industry affect the declared health behaviors and readiness to improve the lifestyle of employees.

The answer to identify the needs and health problems of employees is an original questionnaire prepared for the purposes of this doctoral dissertation. The study population included professionally active employees from among 29 companies operating in Poland. Due to the desire to investigate a wide area and many behavioral factors, the study was conducted using author's original, anonymous questionnaire, posted on the online platform using the Qualtrics tool, safe in terms of GDPR. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions: 7 single choice and 5 multiple choices.

The conducted study showed many statistically significant differences in declared health behaviors and readiness to improve the lifestyle of employees in Poland. As a result, 4,398 responses were obtained, and the data was analyzed for 4 variables: gender, age, age generations and industry (manufacturing vs others). Appropriate statistical tests were used to confirm the hypothesis in the analysis. Based on the analysis of the obtained answers, a number of significant differences were found in the declared approach to health behaviors and readiness to change the lifestyle for the better, both between genders, age generations and manufacturing workers.

Taking into account the results of the research described in this dissertation, preventive and health promoting activities at the workplace should be carefully adapted to the age and gender structure of employees, as well as the industry. It is recommended to conduct employees' needs analysis based on which conscious activities will be built as part of the company's well-being strategy. The work environment is an important place for preventive and health promoting activities, and the employer's involvement may translate into increased productivity, image improvement, as well as increased employee involvement and possible reduction of costs due to sickness absenteeism and presentism. As part of this dissertation, recommendations were also formulated for employers regarding the strategies of preventive and promotional activities that should be undertaken in the surveyed companies in order to strengthen the health potential of employees.