Effectiveness of worksite visit by occupational health nurses

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Backgrounds

• Nothing but health guidance for employees is stipulated as a duty of occupational health nurses (OHN) in Industrial safety and health (ISH) law in Japan.
• Although worksite visit (WV) is an important task for occupational health (OH) professionals, worksite visit by OHN is not stipulated by ISH Law in Japan.

Objectives

• The objective of this study was to examine the situation of worksite visit by OHN and to investigate opinion of OHN and other OH professionals on this service.

Methods

• Questionnaires were mailed in 2010 to 270 OHN, 532 occupational physicians (OP) and 566 hygiene managers (HM) in Kyoto prefecture, in Japan.
• Contents of the Questionnaire – Frequency, Effects of worksite visit (WV), and Demand of WV by OHN, etc.
• Subjects – 111 OHNs (reply rate: 41%) – 187 OPs (reply rate: 35%) – 282 HMs (reply rate: 50%)

Results

Characteristics of OHNs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Women, 100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as an OHN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 years</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A regular member</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A part-time member</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1000</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-299</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frequency of WV by OHN

Do you visit worksite regularly?

- Regularly 38%
- Not frequent 32%
- Irregularly 27%
- No answer 3%

Frequency: 1.0/month (51%), 1.2/week (27%) Accompanied by: OP (4%), HM (43%), alone (50%)

OHN (66%) visited worksite regularly or irregularly.
Remaining OHN did not visit worksite primarily because it was excluded from tasks of OHN in their enterprises (49%) according to the condition in ISH law.
Results
Effects of WV by OHN

Most of OHN thought worksite visit is effective to improve health condition of employees.

They considered that
- Understanding of work of employees and enterprise itself through worksite visit improves the level of health guidance (96%)
- Multidisciplinary worksite visit supports communication between OH professionals (85%).

Results
Opinion by other OH specialists

A larger number of HM considered worksite visit by OHN was more effective than that by OP (HM: 63% vs. OP: 53%, p<0.05).

More than 70% of them in both groups considered that understanding of work of employees and enterprise itself through worksite visit improves the level of health guidance.

Results
Knowledge resource of WV for OHN

OHN usually acquired knowledge of worksite visit from internet like website of Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, lectures by prefectural occupational health centers, or publications (66%), and seldom asked OP for the knowledge (5%).

Forty eight OHN (43%) gave concrete opinion to activate worksite visit by them.
- A legal basis for worksite visit (25%) and support from other OH professionals (21%) were essential.

Conclusion

Although most of OHN and other OH professionals thought worksite visit by OHN was effective for improvement of health of employees, implementation rate was not high in Japan.

Revision of legislation and further support by other OH professionals, especially by OP should be considered to improve the situation.