



■ ISSA Research Section

Inquiry „Work-Related Health Risks: Research and Company Practice“

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Prevention in the workplace today

aims not only to prevent occupational accidents and diseases, but to eliminate or reduce all risks to workers' life and health at work („work-related health risks“).

This requires that companies identify and assess all the potential work-related risks in advance. In many countries, this process is laid down in occupational safety and health (OSH) legislation. Some small and medium-size companies still experience difficulties in identifying such hazards and in applying suitable measures to prevent work-related health risks.



HVBG
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The ISSA Research Section launched an inquiry to gather information from national OSH institutes and authorities on their experience and opinions relating to the prevention of work-related health risks:

1. Main problems and deficits in practical prevention

For different types of risk, (e.g. mechanical, physical, chemical, poor ergonomics, psychological loads) and steps of practical prevention:

- Identification of risks
- Evaluation of risks
- Development of measures
- Implementation of appropriate measures
- Effectiveness of measures

2. Strategies and approaches to overcome the problems in practice

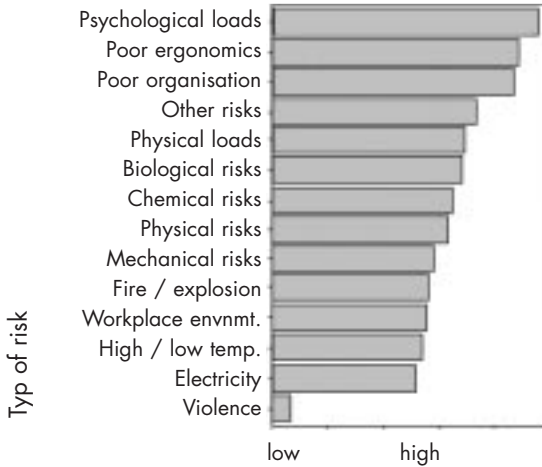
Realisation:

1. Development of a questionnaire on account of former inquiries, e.g. of the European OSH Agency
2. Distribution of the questionnaire to national OSH institutes worldwide
3. Completion of the questionnaire by the institutes
4. Interviews with selected OSH institutes
5. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the answers (questionnaire and interviews)

Results (1): Background

Types of risk

Important deficits and problems in practical OSH prevention



Deficits in practical prevention

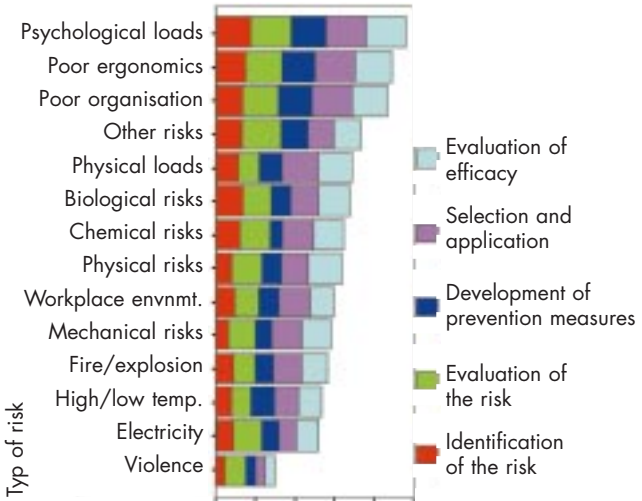
1. Evaluation of the risk
2. Selection of appropriate measures
3. Evaluation of efficacy



Practical prevention and types of risk

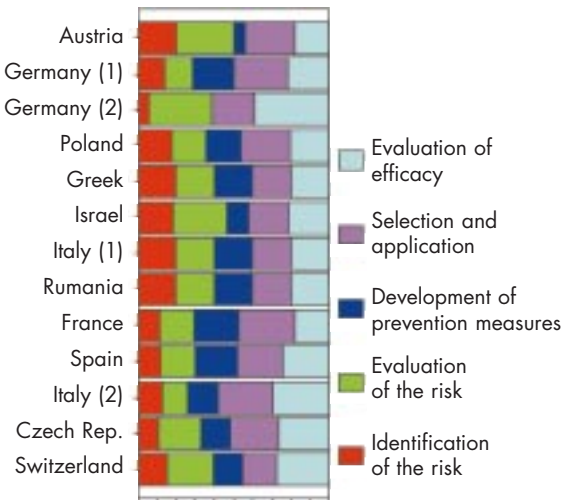
For both, „old“ risks (i.e. chemical, biological) and „new“ risks (i.e. psychological loads, poor ergonomics) deficits are reported for:

- Selection of measures
- Efficacy testing



National differences?

The rating of the prevention steps is very similar in the different countries or institutes



In general, deficits found for the different types of OSH risk are linked closely to the gross domestic product - GDP of a country:

Countries with a low GDP reported important problems or deficits in OSH for all types of risk and all elements of prevention, whereas countries with a higher GDP reported problems or deficits mainly for risks like „Psychological loads“, „Poor ergonomics“ and „Poor organisation of work“ as well as for aspects such as „Development of suitable preventive measures“, „Selection and application / implementation in the company“ and „Evaluation of efficacy“.

Results (2): Approaches for solving the problems

1. According to the national cultural background and the national legislation acceptance of risks and risk levels varied.
2. New methods are required to increase employer's and employee's competence through specific information and training.
3. Efficacy and effectiveness of prevention need to be proven to increase the acceptance of appropriate measures.

Participants in the inquiry :

AUVA (Austria)
BAuA (Germany)
BIA (Germany)
CIOP (Poland)
HIOSH (Greece)
IIOSH (Israel)
INAIL (Italy)
INCDPM (Rumania)
INRS (France)
INSHT (Spain)
ISPESL (Italy)
OSRI (Czech. Rep.)
SUVA (Switzerland)
MKK (Hungary)
IRSST (Canada)