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### **S136: Exploring Emergent Psychosocial Risks in Spain: A Qualitative Approach**

Francisco Bretones, Jose Gonzalez, Antonio Delgado, Rocio Gonzalez  
*University of Granada, Granada, Spain*

**Introduction:** Work conditions are an important source of potential health risks. In fact, occupational hazards have become one of the most serious problems now faced by workers and society in general. This is due to the fact that work conditions are now in a state of constant flux as a consequence of the technological, economic, and social transformations and innovations required to competitively adapt to new work situations and scenarios. But current technological and organizational changes and, overall, economic crisis bring to the fore new and emergent psychosocial risks which need to be explored and characterized.

**Methods:** For this purpose, we performed a qualitative study that focused on company owners, managers, union representatives, and workers in small and medium-sized companies. We opted for a qualitative method because we wished to gain a more in-depth knowledge of the nature of psychosocial risks.

**Results:** Result shows that work intensification, technostress, job uncertainty, competitiveness, job instability are some of them. Despite all of these measures business and companies are still reticent about implementing intervention programs to prevent psychosocial risks.

**Discussion:** Employers as well as employees should know them and be informed of the nature of psychosocial risks, their consequences, and the different forms of intervention available. This would be an important stimulus for occupational risk prevention in organizations, which goes far beyond merely complying with regulations.

### **S137: SME's Perspective on Psychosocial Risks – From Identifying to Intervening in Four Countries**

Patrícia Costa<sup>1</sup>, Sara Ramos<sup>1</sup>, Silvia Silva<sup>1</sup>, Ana Passos<sup>1</sup>, Susana Tavares<sup>1</sup>, Francisco Bretones<sup>2</sup>, Antonio Delgado<sup>2</sup>, Karolina Doulougeri<sup>3</sup>, Katerina Georganta<sup>3</sup>, Barbara Giacomini<sup>4</sup>, Jose Gonzalez<sup>2</sup>, Rocio Gonzalez<sup>2</sup>, Anthony Montgomery<sup>3</sup>, Margherita Pasini<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal, <sup>2</sup>Universidad de Granada, Granada, Spain, <sup>3</sup>University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece, <sup>4</sup>Università Degli Studi di Verona, Verona, Italy

**Introduction:** Certain aspects of the work design or the organization as well as the social context of work may lead to negative physical, psychological and social outcomes. These aspects are considered psychosocial risks. Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece are facing the biggest consequences of the economic crisis with psychosocial risks being exacerbated. In these countries, small and medium enterprises play an important role in the economy. This paper presents the quantitative data from the project, collected in those four countries. The main goal of the survey was to determine the SMEs' perspective about emergent psychosocial risks, difficulties and concerns related to its prevention as well as to assess their knowledge and existing practices regarding psychosocial risks prevention.

**Methodology:** The survey was developed based on existing surveys for assessing psychosocial risks, as well as on data gathered in the qualitative phase of the project (consisting in interviews with key stakeholders). It was accessible either in an online format or as a paper copy. In total, 154 SME safety and health technicians and workers representatives participated in the study.

Results: Although being an important issue, specific policies, management systems, or action plans on psychosocial risks are rarely found in SMEs. Also, risk assessment is seldom conducted, as it is considered too expensive and time consuming. When risk assessment is conducted, it is usually to comply with legal requirements or requirements from clients as well as over concern about the organization's reputation. In general, participants agree that they need more information to promote risk assessment.

Discussion: While health and safety is already an integral part of the management philosophy in most SME's, the introduction of preventive actions beyond legal requirements still need improvement. The project revealed a low level of awareness about psychosocial risks, the almost inexistence of risk assessment practices and a lack of resources for investing in its prevention. To facilitate the change in the prevention practices it is critical to develop resources that organizations could easily use at a low cost.

### **S138: Developing a Psychosocial Risk Tool for SMEs**

Katerina Georganta, Karolina Doulougeri, Anthony Montgomery  
*University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece*

Introduction: In the context of the Participative Prevention of Psychosocial Emergent Risks in SMEs (PPPER) project, a toolkit was developed aimed at providing information about psychosocial risks, assessment instruments for diagnosing psychosocial risks and prevention/intervention suggestions. A workshop was organized for interested stakeholders aimed at disseminating the findings of the PPPER project, presenting the toolkit and receiving feedback on its use and exploring further good practices related to prevention and/or management of psychosocial risks.

Methodology: Based on an extensive literature review and the findings of a qualitative study with SMEs owners, human resources managers and occupational physicians working in SMEs, a toolkit was developed. The toolkit followed the principles of the Job Demands Resources model (JD-R) and it consisted of 3 parts: a) an information part regarding frequently encountered psychosocial risks in SMEs (job demands) as well as available job resources b) an assessment part with questions regarding existing job demands and available job resources which could be answered at an individual, department or company level, and c) suggestions for prevention of psychosocial risks or intervention strategies.

Results: Thirty people participated in the workshop, including important stakeholders such as SMEs owners, employees' representatives, health and safety inspectors and occupational physicians. Participants were split in 5 teams and they conducted group activities, including the evaluation of the toolkit as well as assessment and reflection on good practices with regard to prevention or management of psychosocial risks. Participants of the workshop experience psychosocial hazards on a daily basis. Good practices on dealing with job demands and psychosocial risks (e.g., excessive workload, role conflict, job insecurity) were presented by the participants as well as ways to identify and foster job resources (e.g. trust, civility in the workplace). The toolkit provided an easy to use guide for end users, with adequate information and resources to increase awareness and motivation in dealing with psychosocial risks as well as useful material for prevention and intervention strategies. However, participants indicated the importance of customizing all those information to the specific characteristics of every SME and the need for more training/education opportunities of interested end users regarding prevention and intervention strategies.

Discussion: The workshop provided the opportunity for the dissemination of the psychosocial risk toolkit. Main conclusion for the workshop was the need for an interdisciplinary approach in addressing psychosocial risks in SMEs emphasizing the need to adapt any type of intervention to the specific demands and characteristics of the SME.