

A Systematic Review of Selected Interventions for Worksite Health Promotion: The Assessment of Health Risks with Feedback

The following is a synopsis of a Community Guide Research Brief published in the 2010 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.



What is already known on this topic?

Many health behaviors and physiologic indicators can be used to estimate a person's likelihood of illness or premature death. Methods have been developed to assess this risk, most notably the use of a health-risk assessment or biometric screening tool commonly used in worksite health promotion efforts.

What is added by this article?

This report provides recommendations on the effectiveness of interventions that use an assessment of health risks with feedback (AHRF) alone or as part of a broader worksite health promotion program to improve employees' health. The Guide to Community Preventive Services' methods for systematic reviews were used to evaluate AHRF. Effectiveness was assessed on the basis of changes in health behaviors and physiologic estimates and also was informed by changes in health risk estimates (summary of risk factors reported), health care service use, and worker productivity.

What are the implications for public health practice?

The review team identified strong or sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of AHRF when used alongside health education with or without other intervention components for changes in nine outcomes: tobacco use, alcohol use, blood pressure, cholesterol, dietary fat intake, seatbelt nonuse, health risk estimates, worker absenteeism, and health care service use. There was insufficient evidence to determine effectiveness for improving fruit and vegetable intake, body mass index (BMI), and physical fitness. The team also found insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of AHRF when implemented alone.

This review indicates that AHRF is useful as a gateway intervention to a broader, more comprehensive worksite health promotion program that includes health education lasting one hour or repeating multiple times during one year along with an array of other health promotion activities. The

magnitude of effect may be influenced by type and duration of the intervention component offered, context, and participation rates and characteristics (e.g., higher-risk participants will experience greater health gains). This review also suggests that AHRF may be more effective for some outcomes (e.g., hypertension, cholesterol) than for others (e.g., BMI).

What are the suggestions for policy?

Employers should consider a policy to offer AHRF as a free service to employees, along with health education and other organizational interventions to improve healthy lifestyles as part of a comprehensive worksite health promotion program.

What are the strategic opportunities for states?

- ▶ Assess existing policies for AHRF and other environmental supports for risk reduction and health promotion at worksites.
- ▶ Partner with business coalitions or chambers of commerce to encourage and assist employers in adopting and evaluating AHRF along with other interventions as part of a comprehensive worksite health promotion program.
- ▶ Encourage state employers to provide free or subsidized AHRF as well as insurance incentives for using AHRF that can be delivered through vendors, on-site staff, or state employee health plans.
- ▶ Collaborate with other state chronic disease prevention programs when working with business coalitions and employers and when using these resources.
- ▶ Share evidenced-based tools and resources with employers to give them the information they need to support worksite wellness.

Resources

CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Workplace Health Portal and Toolkit
http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/employers_toolkit.htm

CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
Successful Business Strategies to Prevent Heart Disease and Stroke Toolkit
<http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/library/toolkit/index.htm>

Citations

Soler RE, Leeks KD, Razi S, Hopkins DP, Griffith M, Adam A, et al. A systematic review of selected interventions for worksite health promotion: The assessment of health risks with feedback. *Am J Prev Med.* 2010;38(2S):S237–62.

Task Force on Community Preventive Services. Recommendations for worksite-based interventions to improve workers' health. *Am J Prev Med.* 2010;38(2S):S232–6.

The findings and conclusions in these reports are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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