

Cardiovascular Risk Reduction at the Workplace: The Israeli Experience

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Introduction: Cardiovascular risk remains relatively high in Israel despite a large effort to achieve better control of risk factors. We have demonstrated that it is feasible to improve risk factor control by active intervention using primary care physicians in Israel. This type of intervention was found to be cost effective.

However we need new and better ways to help the population to improve compliance with the guidelines for prevention of cardiovascular disease. Work place is an excellent location for the implementation of such a program.

Methods and Results: We have developed a unique risk score formula taking into account: blood pressure, smoking status, level of physical activity and waist circumference. Six sites of Industry were allocated for the pilot program with at least 100 workers per site. The first approach to the workers was by pamphlets and by an internet site. From 600 potential candidates 389 agreed to join the program. An initiation lecture was given at each site during a special health promotion event organized by forum senior members. After initial assessment of risk score all participants were given a personal coaching focused on life style (diet and physical activity) meetings were at the workplace once a week. Risk score was determined monthly for 6 months. The program caused a reduction in the % of workers with a high risk score from 73% to 14%, increase of intermediate risk from 25% to 52%, and in low risk from 2% to 32%. Most of the reduction in risk was due to increase in physical activity cessation of smoking and better adherence to doctors instructions.

Conclusions: Our preliminary results of intervention at the work place demonstrate that such an approach on a larger scale can reduce CVD risk at the national level.