Facilitators and Barriers for Workplace Participatory Programs: Perspectives from Employees and Management in Three Nursing Homes

Zhang Y1, Flum M1, Kotejoshyer R1, Fleishman J2, Henning, R3, & Punnett L1

1University of Massachusetts Lowell, 2Widener University, 3University of Connecticut, USA

Introductions

Nursing home employees face a range of health problems and workplace hazards.

The NIOSH Total Worker Health Program seeks evaluations of programs that integrate health promotion and protection objectives.

There is evidence that workplace health programs may have better long-term sustainability if employees participate actively in intervention priority-setting and design.

The process of recruiting and engaging employers for participatory programs is challenging.

Background, Objective, Methods

Participatory teams of non-supervisory employees (“Health and Wellness Teams”) were initiated at three nursing homes in 2008.

Objective: Assess facilitators and barriers of the integrated participatory program, three years after initiation of the intervention.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with employees and management at multiple levels within each nursing home, guided by the social-ecological model (McLeroy et al, 1988).

Results

Corporate: “release time”

Organizational: organizational culture and structure; leadership/management; funding/resources

Group: presence of the wellness champion; function of the health and wellness team

Interpersonal: communication; peer pressure

Intrapersonal: employee motivation and participation

Introduction

Nursing home employees face a range of health problems and workplace hazards.

The NIOSH Total Worker Health Program seeks evaluations of programs that integrate health promotion and protection objectives.

There is evidence that workplace health programs may have better long-term sustainability if employees participate actively in intervention priority-setting and design.

The process of recruiting and engaging employers for participatory programs is challenging.

The Social Ecological Model was used effectively to conceptualize the integrated participatory program development and evaluation.

Factors cited by employees and management represented both facilitators and barriers. Employees and management agreed on most factors; with some discrepancies.

Management support, sufficient resources, and time release for program participation were the three factors identified by employees as most important for the effectiveness of the integrated participatory program.

The presence of a functional health and wellness team with an active leader/coordinator was seen by both employees and management as essential for communication between employees and managers, and to motivate employee participation and communication.

The findings can inform future efforts to promote facilitators and reduce barriers at multiple levels to promote success and sustainability of integrated participatory programs.

Conclusions

The Social Ecological Model was used effectively to conceptualize the integrated participatory program development and evaluation.

Factors cited by employees and management represented both facilitators and barriers. Employees and management agreed on most factors; with some discrepancies.

Management support, sufficient resources, and time release for program participation were the three factors identified by employees as most important for the effectiveness of the integrated participatory program.

The presence of a functional health and wellness team with an active leader/coordinator was seen by both employees and management as essential for communication between employees and managers, and to motivate employee participation and communication.

The findings can inform future efforts to promote facilitators and reduce barriers at multiple levels to promote success and sustainability of integrated participatory programs.