

Sustainable, long-term benefits on well-being at work with KivaQ method

Introduction

The economic and societal importance of well-being at work is substantial. It correlates with organisational performance indicators such as productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, lower employee turnover, and sick leave. Numerous work well-being projects are carried out at workplaces and notable resources are spent. Demonstrating the impact of work well-being interventions has usually been done by comparing results before and soon after the project. However, evidence of long-term effects is scarce.

The aim of this study was to examine the long-term effects of a KivaQ well-being at work intervention in a municipal health care organisation, Åland Hospital District, for a period of four years. In the Kiva Q intervention workshops, the personnel tutored by a facilitator actively planned, prioritised, and implemented jointly agreed work-related measures.

Material and methods

The study group consisted of intervention (n=8) and control units (n=39). We measured well-being at work with the validated KivaQ W questionnaire, at the baseline (n=615), after two years (n=674) and after four years (n= 671) and compared the results. Because well-being at work of intervention units was significantly lower at the baseline than that of control units, 6.87 vs. 7.77 ($p<0,001$), we calculated the results also adjusted for baseline.

Results

The well-being at work of intervention units improved significantly from baseline (6.87) to two-year mark (7.52) ($p<0,001$) and kept its level at four-year mark 7.44 ($p<0,001$). Meanwhile, there was no significant change in the well-being at work in control units. The difference of well-being at work between intervention and control units was still significant at the two-year mark ($p<0,003$), but no longer at the four- year mark ($p= 0,059$). The difference in between groups remained significant also when adjusted for baseline ($p=0,001$).

Conclusions and future prospects

Our results showed that there can be a long-term effect of well-being at work interventions. Results are in line with previous studies which has showed that well planned and goal-oriented interventions, where the personnel participate actively, the measures are targeted according to perceived risk and to work instead of individuals, the organizations' management is committed, and the results are followed up, provide most impact. However, our results must not be generalized to all work well-being interventions that, unlike KivaQ, lack those features. Nevertheless, we need more high-quality long-term research evidence of the effectiveness of different kinds of interventions.