



# Management Role in Taking Healthy Sitting Posture among Workers

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in workplace health-related problems. The issue of Musculo Skeletal Disorders (MSD) has received considerable critical attention. Taking healthy posture has a pivotal role in prevention of MSD. In this study the management roles in taking proper sitting posture in workplace were assessed.

**Method and Instruments:** A Semi-structured interview according to purposive sampling was conducted with a convenience sample of office workers working in Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBUS). Interviews were recorded and transcribed into MAXQDA software version. Content analysis was used to establish the presence of certain themes and concepts within the text.

**Findings:** This study revealed that there are four determinants as management role related to taking healthy sitting behavior among workers in workplaces. These determinants including: role modeling, setting policy, management support and manager healthy mindset.

**Conclusions:** The identified factors provide organizational managers with a list of factors by which they can encourage their employees to use healthy postures in the workplace leading to significant reductions in job absenteeism and insurance fees associated with health problems.

**Keywords:** Healthy Sitting Posture, Office Worker, Management, Qualitative Study.

## Introduction

Worksite is an important public health setting due to the fact the majority of adults spend much amounts of their daily time at work, so the working environment has an essential impact on the employees' health. Addressing both the work environment and individual health behavior are crucial to producing profits in worker health<sup>[1]</sup>. Reaching a healthful workplace not only improved health for individuals but also promote health and well-being caused economic advantages for companies<sup>[2]</sup>, because individuals spend the majority of their waking hours in their workplace<sup>[3]</sup>.

Investigating health of this group of people may be very vital. Meantime studies revealed that, personnel spend

extra than eight hours per day in sitting position in their working place<sup>[4]</sup>. The lengthy sitting time may also cause health related problem for the personnel<sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) may be the most common disease among all job-related complications in modern workforce<sup>[7]</sup>. The MSD are defined as muscular pain or injuries to the human support system<sup>[8, 9]</sup>. Improper posture, meanwhile acts as a key factor leading to MSD<sup>[10-13]</sup>. Poor sitting posture in the workplace (e.g., leaning forward cause upper limb and neck pain), not only influences personal life and productivity of a worker but also it causes significant burdens on health system<sup>[14]</sup>. While we are researching the determinants of poor sitting posture, we want to look at both

individual and organizational elements to pick out perceived behavioral determinants and obstacles to a proper sitting posture in the workplace before we create effective interventions.

In creating an environment in which workers can succeed and experience wellbeing, managers play an important role<sup>[15]</sup>. Organizational management has been connected to a variety of outcomes from employee safety, health and well-being consisting of organizational safety environment<sup>[16]</sup>, work-related well-being<sup>[15, 17]</sup>, occupational accidents<sup>[17, 18]</sup> and health habits<sup>[19, 20]</sup>. Therefore, one question that needs to be asked is which management determinants meet taking a safe sitting posture for workers. This study set out to investigate the role of management in employees' healthy sitting behavior.

### Method and Instruments

Between July 2018 and May 2019, this qualitative study was conducted to identify management role in taking proper sitting posture among office workers. The interviewees were done among college workers with mean age 42 years old. The requirement for joining the study were the ability to communicate in Farsi language and the willingness to share information. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria for the office worker were as employed in the worksite for at least 2 years, using the computer to perform their duties, and belonging to one of the offices of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBUS).

Exclusion criteria included as working on other office and not inclined to keep the interview on the time of the interview.

Main researcher approached each prospective participant to clarify priorities and interview question and if the participant agreed to participate in the research, a

face-to face interview with him/her was conducted.

Team members with extensive experience in health services research collaboratively formed topic interview guide that facilitated semi structured interview and promoted more detailed discussion by the participants. The researcher conducted face-to face interview at times that were most convenient for the participants. Two employees at the SBUMS were interviewed to pilot the interview schedule and process. Interviews took about 18-30 minutes to be completed. Key questions from all participants were about management role in taking a healthy sitting posture at their workplace.

### Data analysis

Results were collected using MAXQUDA version 10 software to classify determinants of safe sitting posture among workers. All interviews were conducted, recorded, transcribed verbatim, reviewed, coded, and immediately analyzed by the first researcher. According content analysis process, at first, each interview was read several times carefully to gain a deep understanding of the content. Later, important statements were underlined to identify initial codes or meaning units existing in the interview text. Data collection process was continued until data saturation was obtained. When no new code was produced in the last three interviews, data saturation was achieved and data collection was stopped. Moreover, the content and description of themes were discussed with two other researchers and consensus was reached on the finalized themes and descriptions of the theme content.

### Findings

Of the 30 office workers who were invited to the interview, 25 approved and 5 workers refused to participate in the study because they did not want their voices to be recorded

because of their job positions. We interviewed the remaining subjects. Our study revealed that there are four determinants linked to taking a healthy sitting posture that was considered as management factor. These determinants are as following:

### **Manager healthy mindset**

Employee states " *I suppose health isn't a critical concern as supervisor perspective, doing duty is more crucial than workers health conditions*".

Another worker points out that, " *I think the manager is responsible for the existence of a healthy atmosphere in the workplace, so he should also have planned health-based courses for us in the office in this regard among organizational courses*". (Interview No:3).

Another point is that " *if the manager sees us as a vulnerable resource, we can easily ask for everything that is necessary for our health*". (Interview No:5).

### **Manager as role model in organization**

As employee argues: " *supervisor as a person who is model for us, haven't any right posture during working hour*". (Interview No:3).

### **Set healthy policy in organization**

An expert's statements, "manager can efficiently set organizational healthy rules, health policy can foster worker well-being " (Interview No:10).

Another employee notes that " *in my opinion, the allocation of resources for health programs is a key factor in boosting healthy behavior, for example in our company, we have held three health promotion programs related to physical activity, nutrition and stress that all employees have participated in such programs* " (Interview No:4).

### **Manager support**

On participant in this regard stated: " *we don't obtain any support from the company*

*for doing this behavior that is came returned to management in our company*" (Interview No:8)

### **Discussion**

The purpose of current qualitative research was to identify management role to healthy sitting posture among workers. Previous researchers have identified various factors that have a critical impact on employee health, such as individual variables, task-related factors and aspects of the immediate work context, such as management behavior [21-23].

Previous evidences show that health-promoting management is principal elements for worker health.[24, 25]. Health-promoting leadership activities also paying attention to subordinate stress, encouraging subordinates to take part in health promotion activities at the workplace, and acting as a role model for health.

As role modeling, it is important to influence the cognitions and actions of others [26]. Managers may encourage the health-related knowledge and behavior of workers by modeling, enhancing and directing these behaviors [27].

Managers usually are chosen as role models because of the emotional attractiveness that comes with the power, experience, and prestige of management positions. Management attitudes often form norms and represent values at work. However, the previous study revealed that managers do not even have to be aware of their role modeling; they unconsciously imitate behaviors in companies daily [26].

Since managers ' health habits are typically measurable by others, health awareness as a primarily cognitive phenomenon can be experienced by communication as managers may be able to talk about their health-related thoughts and experiences.

According to the theory of social learning,

learning experiences related to role modeling could be motivated by three rules (26). First, individuals obtain reinforcement for crucial behaviors through role modeling. If managers have been aware of their health, it demonstrates to staff that a high-quality attitude closer to health issues is welcome at work.

Bandura (1986) proposed that several reminders support to reveal new behaviors. As a result, managers may support employees' health awareness via being a regular cue for health-related self-regulation.

Third, employees may also gain new insights by observing the health awareness of their managers, developing new attitudes and learning new behaviors. In addition, when employees observe the health awareness of their managers resulting in better health, which is called symbolic experience, according to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1986), employees may be even more motivated to attend and reflect on their health.

A health mindset involves general knowledge about health and attention and sensitivity toward employees stress and health signals [24]. Kaluza et al. noted that health mindset acts as mediator between health-promoting leadership and organizational health climate [28]. Managers are also creating an organizational culture that promotes wellness by directly endorsing programs and showing visible support for the health of employees [29].

Organizational climate can also have an indirect impact on the health of employees by reducing hazards, risks or demands in addition to promoting health and safety through the establishment of safety procedures [30]. As proposed by Deloy and colleagues, management support is typical as a crucial prerequisite for the success of health promotion programs in the workplace [31, 32]. Even healthy people 2010

refers to "comprehensive programs" while setting targets for health promotion at the workplace. Supporting social and physical environments are considered to be essential aspects of comprehensive programs within this framework [33].

The setting of health policy was another factor. This is in good agreement with existed evidence that clarified that managers are responsible for the established programs and policies and the allocation of resources to support the implementation of programs and policies [34].

### Conclusion

Managers play an important role in employee health (a) by providing resources and making requests. In other words, management is often concerned with the well-being of employees because it will lead to outcomes that are important to the organization, including lower health care costs, reduced absenteeism/turnover, and increased productivity. The health of workers, which defined generally, is therefore important for both individuals and organizations, and it can be argued that it is important for society as a whole to influence the health of workers on national health care costs, the level of productivity and the quality of life of their citizens [35].

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**Ethical Permission:** Ethical approval was obtained from Ethics Committee of the Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (Ethics Code of IR.SBMU.PHNS.REC.1397.038). Written informed consent was obtained from individuals who participated in this study.

**Author's contributions:** PH, AR, MG, SST conceptualized and designed the project. PH, AR led analysis of the transcripts, and developed the manuscript. MG and SST performed the critical review. All authors reviewed and approved the final version.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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