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ABSENTEEISM

Employee absenteeism is the frequently absence of a worker from his or her work. This absence is often habitual and it excludes authorized leaves or paid time off. To be more realistic, every organization recognizes the fact that it is not easy to show up for work every day. Therefore, they have put policies that guide emergency cases and health issues. Nevertheless, when these off days are frequent, it becomes a problem and is absenteeism. Employee absenteeism is a serious problem that denatures the workflow and productivity in an organization. Absenteeism is very costly to organizations. Relating to the statistics from Mid Cheshire Hospital that suffered a loss of £1 million each year, a study found out that a major airline suffered a similar amount each day due to unscheduled absences. Moreover, approximately 14.3% of every business' payroll comes from time off. The costs associated with absenteeism are very significant when taking into account everything that is involved (Kocakulah *et al.*, 2016).

Employee absenteeism does not only affect the organization; it also affects individual employees ("*What is Employee Absenteeism? Effect, Reasons, Remedies,*" 2019). It affects the individual employee proactivity. In simple terms, if someone is regularly absent, they are likely to be less productive. As employers, they should be keen in observing the root causes of this absenteeism case, which may be due to lack of work morale or motivation, sickness in the family, depression and stress, and lack of housing. Absenteeism may also affect team spirit. Employees in the office may be left out making out on the work not performed; leading to burnout. Supervisor total output is also denatured. In simple terms, one of the major impact of absenteeism is the increased workload on the remaining workforce (Kocakulah *et al.*, 2016).

PESTLE ANALYSIS

Political Factors

One of the political factors that lead to Absenteeism among the NHS hospitals is the Brexit uncertainties. These uncertainties have led into general fear of most foreign employees on their fate and place in Mid Cheshire Hospital. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union has set an impact on different societies. The most important issue arises with the staffing rationale. A larger number of employees initially originated from other EU countries and there are concerns that the workforce in NHS might hit very hard if Brexit results in unfavorable living conditions for foreigners. Perhaps, these may start causing employee absenteeism due to relocation procedures entailed (Faccini and Palombo, 2021).

Economic factors

Some of the economic factors that are seen to impact employee absenteeism among NHS hospitals are the economic downturn of the year 2008 and the austerity measures. The 2008 economic financial crisis took a toll in the whole world including the United Kingdom and this affected the NHS. Coupled with the existing economic battles the NHS had been experiencing for more than a decade, the economic downturn affected it further. This made it difficult for the NHS to lender the required quality of care to its patients. This is because; it led into absenteeism and lack of qualified staff. The minimal wages served to send away most workers while leaving the rest demotivated. The United Kingdom further introduced austerity measures to counter the effects of economic downturn, which involved budget cut. This served to exacerbate the organization's money problem (McGauran, 2008).

Social cultural factors

There are a number if social economic factors that affect NHS workforce. Two of these factors include the aging population of the labor force and high patient expectations. In the UK, the average age of population is increasing and this is true to the healthcare workforce. The aging population tend to be exacerbated by terminal illnesses such as diabetes, cancer and other health problems. These are extremely costly to treat and most patients spend a lot of time finding healthcare solutions to them. As the population of old aged healthcare workforce increase, so is the absenteeism rates (World, 2001).

Patient have a good knowledge base on the treatment options due to advanced social media information. This has put pressure on healthcare practitioners to provide better healthcare than ever. For this reason, most healthcare workers tend to be

demotivated especially when they receive directions from the patients. This leads to absenteeism due to low self-esteem.

Technological factors

Various technological factors affect NH. These are better education and technological improvement. With improved technology, there has been various pumps and tools for treating and managing health conditions leading into reduced mortality. This has led into quality diagnosis standard of care and automation of clinical tasks. Moreover, technology has opened doors for better healthcare education, which applies to both patients and clinical professionals. This has made it easier for NHS to find a clinical qualified staff that replaces the baby boomers in the workplace. This results into absenteeism especially when the baby boomers feel less represented in the advanced technology.

Legal factors

The UK as well as other nations in the world face a growing trend of litigation. This involve healthcare related lawsuits and there are no signs of a decreasing trend. This causes the healthcare to use hefty expenses on legal defense. This has consequently led into numerous absenteeism due to time spent in courts.

Environmental factors

NHS as well as other healthcare related industries produce toxic waste that is accumulating throughout the world. The NHS has been under fire from various environmental based activist organizations, which require them to better their waste management system and to avoid adding to global waste crisis. Some of these waste

especially, the sharps and biological wastes may be a source of hospital acquired infections, which consequently result into workforce absenteeism.

Cause and effect analysis of the complex problem.

In this part, we would at the complex problem (absenteeism) as a cause and as an effect.

a.) The effects of absenteeism on healthcare professionals remaining on duty

Being a global problem, absenteeism has drawn attention to factors that contribute to its occurrence and little has been explored on the effects of absenteeism on the healthcare workforce remaining in the workplace. A study conducted by Mbombi and his colleagues (2018) on the effects of absenteeism on nurses on duty at a tertiary hospital in Limpopo Province found out that, absenteeism has an effect on both the nurses' professional and psychological wellbeing. It also has an impact on the quality of patient care, which is because of low morale of nurses, increased workload and nurse burnout, and psychological stress. Furthermore, the study indicated that, the remaining nurses provided sub-standard services, which lowered their professional credibility. Therefore, absenteeism creates and fosters unhealthy working conditions (Mbombi *et al.*, 2018).

Absenteeism is a global problem that causes countries to lose billions of money per year even though there are numerous measures put in place to counter the problem (Walker and Bamford, 2011). Furthermore, due to the fact that absenteeism causes

strain to the remaining workforce, some nurses therefore may decide to look for better working environment where absenteeism is less experienced (Mudaly and Nkosi, 2015).

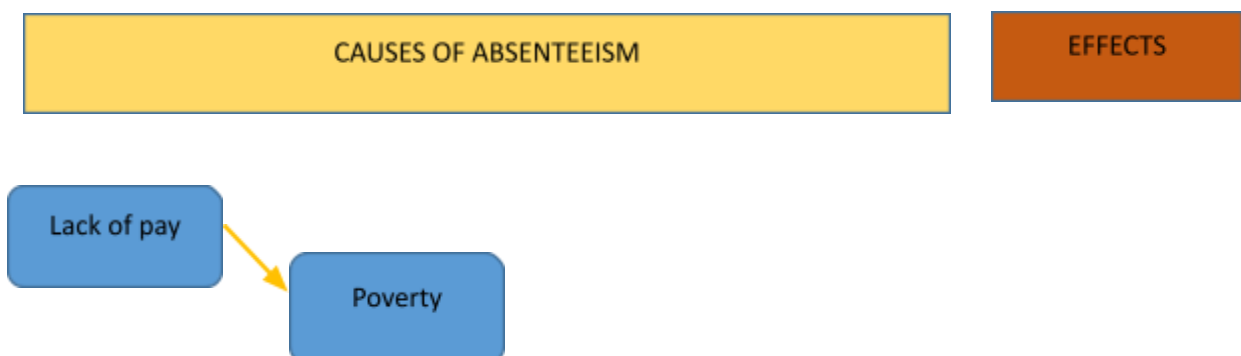
b.) absenteeism as the effect

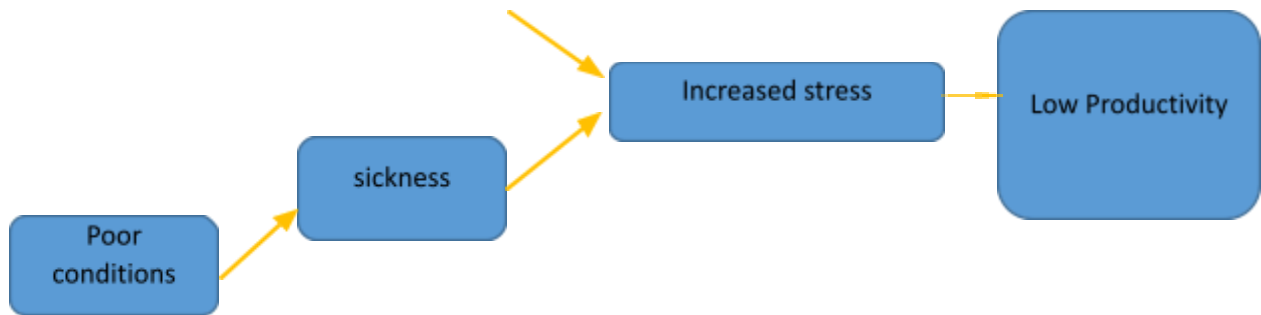
A study conducted by Truman (2003) found that personal illnesses accounted for 33% of unscheduled absenteeism, 21% were due to personal needs, 24% due to family issues, and 10% due to mental entitlement in the US (Truman, 2003).

Personal illnesses cause the majority absences as shown. However, it has been found out that these illnesses are sometimes faked. Another commonly observed cause of absenteeism is family issues. While it is hectic to balance between work and family, childcare is often a major issue as child needs like school and care comes first causing late report to work or total absence at work.

Stress accounts for about 12 percent of employee absences. According to Haswell (2003), about 6.5 million sick days are taken each year due to stress. Causes of stress and stressors are diverse and they include poor working environments, a long job working hours, job security worries, and job monotony (Haswell and Mckinnon, 2003).

The Fishbone diagram for examining absenteeism





Evaluation of alternative solutions to work related stress

Work related stress is on rise. This has been confirmed by various studies. For instance, the annual NHS Staff Survey (2020) reported that, 44% of staff reported feeling unwell because of work related stress. They noted that, there has been a steady increase from 2016 (36.8%) (*Statistics » 2020 National NHS Staff Survey, 2020*).

There are legal, financial, quality and moral reasons for managing stress in the workplace. First, stress is an adverse reaction people have to an excess pressure and demands of life and work. Stress can reveal itself if we observe signs such as repeated arguments, higher staff turnover, increased reports on stress, more sickness absence, decreased performance, more grievance and complains.

There are various solutions for stress, which employers can use to curb stress problems. These include and are not limited to:

Employers should lead by example.

One of the causes of stress in the workplace is the impact of managers and their skills to manage the employees and stress. As a leader, it is very important that you envelop your emotions so that you do not let anger, stress and negativity take the better side of yourself.

Introducing a workplace wellness scheme.

Exercise is very important in combating stress. Employee workplace wellness scheme like discounted local gyms for your employees may help in curbing employee stress.

Effective communication.

The most important mode of stress management in a company is effective communication. Employees feel appreciated, comfortable and well informed when their employers keeps them up to date regarding their expectations and performances. There is nothing worse in the world than being kept in the dark side of the tunnel. The more an employer communicates with their employees, the more they feel free to share their concerns, thoughts and ideas. This in turns makes the company culture stronger, absenteeism is reduced and the workforce becomes competent and dedicated to work. Good communication is the magic behind which everything finds a solution.

Create a social activity

A social activity contributes to good working environment. The more people enjoy at the workplace, the more and the better the atmosphere. This further leads into more productivity, less absenteeism, and less stress. Social activities may be inform of team

lunches, nights out, team away days and social events. Social events boosts morale reduces stress and contributes to team building.

In conclusion, one of the ways in which we can deal with stress is first by identifying the causes of stress, how stress presents itself and trying to understand why it happens so that we can find out solutions based on the causes and effects. For us to get to dig out this crucial data, employers should feel free, protected and comfortable to propel their concerns. This needs a culture, which allows employers to communicate more easily and freely. Therefore, effective communication is the most effective way of reducing stress in the workplace.

Plan of action

ACTION PLAN				
Vision: To continually improve the health outcomes of the people we care about for though our role is to provide high value health care				
Goal: To lead the community to optimal health and wellness through clinical and service excellence, collaboration and compassion for every patient, every time.				
ACTI ON STEPS	PERSON S RESPONSIBLE	TIMELI NE: START AND END	NEED ED	EVALUATI ON

			RESOURCES	
Team lunch	Nurses/doctors and other staff	Each Friday of the week, lunch hour.	Free meals and drinks for hospital staff	Electronic online Satisfaction feedback.
Team night out	Research department and other departments that do not work at night	Every first Saturday of the month from 8pm to 11pm.	Finances to hire hotel Key speakers on stress management	Survey to get feedback and opinions on how the meeting went. Documentation and tracking of effects over a year for analysis.
Social events	All free healthcare workers	All hospital staff	Public address systems Finances for meals Physical activities	Observing the level of excitement of the involved audience

			for fun like ball games. Speak ers on balancing family and work life. Speak er to encourage communication fostering between employees and employers.	
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Measure of effectiveness

The effectiveness will be measured in terms of frequency. For instance:

We can observe either an increase or decrease in the frequency of how many stress cases are being reported.

Decreasing on increasing number of absenteeism

Staff satisfaction feedback using anonymous feedbacks

Patient satisfaction/experience feedback.

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