DISCLOSURE AND SECRECY ABOUT DEPRESSION IN THE EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT: ACROSS 16 COUNTRIES

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Overview

1. Global context of depression and employment

2. Multinational comparisons in relation to
   - Openness and disclosure of depression in the workplace
   - Manager reactions and support

3. Describe the relationship between disclosure of depression / manager responses and workplace productivity
CONTEXT OF DEPRESSION AND EMPLOYMENT
Depression in the workplace

• By far, the greatest contributor to the overall economic impact of depression is loss in productivity.... but

• Beliefs reported by employers (survey of 500 UK employers)
  – 44% thought employees ‘suffering from stress are able to work effectively at all time points
  – 42% thought workplace policies for mental health / stress were designed to avoid litigation

• Global INDIGO survey (35 countries) showed 71% of people with depression conceal their diagnosis in the workplace

• Public stigma and workplace culture may influence both openness and disclosure and productivity

Lasalvia, et al., 2013 Lancet; Henderson et al. 2013 BJP
METHODS
Data source

- Global IDEA survey (Impact of Depression in the Workplace Audit) survey

- Participants were recruited through an online market research panel

- 16 diverse countries
  - 7 European countries: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Turkey
  - 9 additional countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, South Africa, USA

- 1,000 respondents / country who were in employment
Measures

Employee variables
- Sodiodemographics (age, gender, education, marital status, working status)
- Previous diagnosis of depression

Among employees with a diagnosis of depression
- Openness and disclosure--didn’t tell manager because of (i) fear of losing job / economic climate and (ii) felt manager wouldn’t understand / know what to do
- Presenteeism
- Absenteeism

Manager responses in relation to depression
- Offered help to employee
- Avoided talking about it
- No support offered to managers in dealing with depression
Results
Openness and disclosure among employees with depression
% who didn’t tell employer about depression because fear of losing job

- Japan
- Australia
- USA
- South Korea
- Germany
- Canada
- China
- South Africa
- Italy
- Turkey
- Denmark
- France
- Mexico
- Brazil
- Great Britain
- Spain
% who didn’t tell employer about depression because they wouldn’t understand/wouldn’t know what to do

- USA
- Japan
- Australia
- Germany
- Italy
- Canada
- South Korea
- Mexico
- South Africa
- Denmark
- France
- China
- Turkey
- Spain
- Brazil
- Great Britain
Support from managers
% Offered help to employee with depression

- Mexico
- Australia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Turkey
- Brazil
- Great Britain
- Denmark
- Canada
- USA
- France
- China
- Italy
- Germany
- South Korea
- Japan

Countries are listed in descending order based on the percentage of help offered to employees with depression.
% Avoided talking about it with employee

- South Korea
- China
- Italy
- Turkey
- Japan
- Germany
- South Africa
- Brazil
- Spain
- USA
- France
- Mexico
- Australia
- Great Britain
- Canada
- Denmark
% Report no support for dealing with employees with depression

- South Korea: 30%
- China: 27%
- Italy: 13%
- Turkey: 11%
- Japan: 11%
- Germany: 10%
- South Africa: 8%
- Brazil: 7%
- Spain: 6%
- USA: 5%
- France: 5%
- Mexico: 4%
- Great Britain: 3%
- Canada: 3%
- Denmark: 2%
HOW DO THESE FACTORS RELATE TO PRODUCTIVITY
Factors associated with absenteeism

- Employer wouldn't understand
- Fear losing job
- No manager support
- Offered help
- Avoid talking about it

Greater than 1 represents a greater likelihood of absenteeism

Controlled for: gender, age, education, country prevalence depression, GDP
Factors associated with presenteeism (subset of 8 countries) among employees with depression

Controlled for: gender, age, education, prevalence depression, GDP

Greater than 1 represents a greater likelihood of presenteeism
FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Our findings suggest that structural factors such as benefit systems and flexible working hours are important for workplace perceptions and employee outcomes; however, it seems that manager responses which focus on offering help to the employee with depression have the strongest association with positive perceptions in the workplace and also, openness and disclosure of employees with depression.

Avoidance, may result from prejudice and negative beliefs, and only adds to ignorance
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Mentally ill people 'hit hard by recession'

The economic recession across Europe has had a profound impact on people with mental health problems, research from King's College London suggests.

Between 2006 and 2010, the rate of unemployment for those with mental health problems rose twice as much as for other people - from 12.7% to 18.2%.

Men and those with low levels of education were particularly affected, the study said.

The authors warn that social exclusion could increase among the mentally ill.

Scientists collected data from 20,000 people across 27 EU countries using the Eurobarometer survey, which looked at mental health, attitudes to those with mental health problems and current employment rate.

For those without mental health problems, the unemployment rate increased from 7.1% in 2006 to 9.8% in 2010 - half the increase compared with the previous group.

In addition, the study identified that men with mental health problems were particularly vulnerable. The unemployment rate for this group increased from 13.7% in 2006 to 21.7% in 2010.

Stigma

The researchers, from the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College London, found that negative attitudes to people with mental health problems were a factor in the rise in unemployment.

The study said: "Living in a country where a higher proportion of..."
Summary & Conclusions

• Depression is a significant issue among workplaces worldwide.

• There is substantial variation across countries in terms of openness around depression and also comfort and knowledge of managers on how to deal with depression in the workplace.

• Manager responses and workplace culture have significant consequences for productivity

• More openness and an environment where managers can feel comfortable to offer help and support the employee rather than avoid them is associated with less absenteeism and more presenteeism.

• Further support for managers to directly help employees and support to help employees feel open and comfortable to discuss mental health issues are needed
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