

All in a Day's Work

Explanatory research to determine the impact continence problems can have on a person's ability to work

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Background

- PromoCon – integral service of the charity Disabled Living, North West
- Provides product information, advice, practical solutions and facilitates service development
- Core Service – Helpline
- Project Rationale – Increased Calls

Previous Studies

- Primarily in US – Fitzgerald et al (2000), Kirkland et al (2001), Fitzgerald et al (2002), Palmer et al (2002)
- Fultz et al (2005) did consider practical issues
- Incontact Lifestyle Survey (Smith & Nephew, 1995)
- Irwin et al (2006) Impact OAB on employment, social interactions and emotional wellbeing in six European countries (BJU, 2006. Vol. 97)

Aims of the Research

To identify

- the issues faced by people with continence problems whilst at work
- if working in specific employment settings contributed to the problem
- if healthcare professionals are supporting their patients in relation to continence management in the workplace
- which continence management strategies or products are commonly used
- how employers can best support employees with bladder or bowel problems

Method & Design

- Sample – individuals 16-65yrs employed or not working due to continence related problems
- Individuals invited to participate
- Avoidance of gender bias
- Telephone interview to inform questionnaire design

Data Analysis

- 84 individuals expressed interest in participation
- 62 individuals participated (74% response rate)
- 73%men – 27% women
- Respondents – wide range continence problems, both urinary & faecal. Also enuresis

Consultation with Healthcare Professionals

- 97% consulted healthcare professional
Work Related Interaction
- 89% GP – no interaction
- 79% Continence Advisor – 29% no interaction
- 73% then referred to Consultant – 55% no interaction

Health, Work & Wellbeing

- 60% waking time spent at work (HEA, 1997)
- ‘supporting and engaging healthcare professionals so they recognise the importance of work for their patient’s wellbeing and ensure that they can provide the assistance necessary to fulfil their role in helping their patients to remain in and return to work’

Health, Work & Wellbeing (DWP, 2005:13)

Re-assessment & Products

- ‘periodic re-assessment (at least yearly) to check that needs have not changed or there is not a newer product available, which would be more suitable.’

Good Practice in Continence Services, DH 2000

- ‘providing patients with information on the range of products available enables them to make informed choices as to which product would best suit their lifestyle.’

Main Concerns

- Disposing of soiled pads (74%)
- Taking products to the toilet (73%)
- Odour control (66%)
- Fear of colleagues finding out (63%)
- Working away from home (40%)

Other Concerns

- Meetings – especially chairing meetings
- Company medical insurance

Working in Specific Employment Settings

- Teachers/Nursery Nurses
- Nurses
- Building Industry
- Catering/Food Environment
- Workers wearing a uniform
- Drivers
- Retail Industry
- Call Centre Workers

Continence Issues in Perspective

- A company with 3,500 employees – 2000 women & 1,500 men – *potentially 45 men & between 100 and 285 women depending on age may have continence problems*
- A company with 65 employees – 5 men & 60 women – *potentially between 3 & 8 women depending on age may have bladder or bowel problems*

Not all Negative

- Employers reaction fine – health centre took confidential notes, followed up a few months later by an interview with occupational people checking facilities are ok

Senior Lecturer

- When I returned to work after 13 months sick leave for a bladder operation the personnel officer was supportive. A bidet was installed

Ex Residential Childcare Officer

- I work for a disability organisation so the facilities at work are good

Direct Payments Manager

- Only one of my work colleagues is aware of my problems and when she found out she was very supportive

Pharmacist

- The two ladies I work with know the full extent of my incontinence...they have been brilliant

Accounts Clerk

- Being more open about the problem could reduce most of the problems

Accounts Clerk

All in a Day's Work- a comprehensive study

- Promotional prospects
- Sick leave
- Interaction with colleagues, managers & occupational health
- Disabled facilities
- Perception of 'incontinence' as a disability
- Employer support/cost effective practical solutions
- Recommendations for future work

What Next? May 2007

- Dissemination of research & evaluation of change in practice
- Healthcare Professionals – Continence Specialists, Consultants, Oncology Specialists & Occupational Health
- Work with Employers, Human Resource Professionals & Trade Unions
- Disability Employment Advisors

Dissemination & Evaluation

- 2 year funding from Lloyds TSB Foundation - £30K
- Dissemination 18months
- Evaluation 6 months
- Final report December 2009

Continence Advisors

- Conferences & journal articles
- Increase calls to helpline or via email for management strategies – patients & professionals
- Development – leaflet & poster aimed at patients

Employers

- Occupational Health – survey
- Men's Health Forum
- Briefing Paper – available to download from PromoCon website

Trade Unions

- Initially little response
- NUJ (National Union Journalists) – Hidden Disability Report
- Minister for Disability – Jonathan Shaw MP
- TUC Disability Committee

Disability Employment Advisors

- 'Ability First' course
- Initial presentation to 4 DEA's – October 07
- Further presentation to Job Centre Plus Workers – Manchester, Salford and Trafford
- Working in partnership – pilot in GP surgeries

Further Dissemination

- The acute sector
 - Consultants
 - Urology Nurses
 - Oncology Nurses
- Voluntary sector

Measured Outcomes

- Employers – 25% would change working practices
- For Continence Advisors to ask patients of working age how they manage continence problems at work during a routine continence assessment
- The Health and Safety Executive issuing a directive to state a disposal bin to be installed in at least one men's toilet cubicle other than the disabled toilet facilities

Contact Details

- PromoCon Helpline **0161 834 2001**
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Discussion

- When undertaking a continence assessment do you specifically ask people of working age how they manage their bladder and/or bowel problems at work?
- Prior to this presentation did you consider the real issues facing people at work?
- Do you have examples of patients who experience problems at work?
- How would you change your current practice?