Allocating Discretionary Corporate Resources to Workplace Health Promotion Programs: The Factors affecting Controllers, Senior General Managers and Human Resource Managers

If workplace HP activity is to reduce the cost of health-care in a publicly funded environment, understanding the beliefs and motivation of decision-makers directly responsible for allocating resources to HP is important. This paper reports the results of an empirical study of the attitudes of Canadian controllers, and those of senior general managers and human resource managers, towards the cost and other consequences of increasing discretionary spending on HP.

We found that the strongest motivator for controllers is their perceived moral responsibility to their employees’ well being. Cost control was unimportant for controllers, but not for the other management groups. A social norm that organizations should provide HP programs played no role. These differences in motivation for management groups who control the resource allocation to organizational HP has important implications for effective implementation of cost-effective workplace HP, and for policy makers as they strive to control the cost of publicly-funded systems.