

## **THE RATIONALE OF THE WORKPLACE ISSUES OF A STRESS MANAGEMENT EVENT; AN APPROACH TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE IN ORGANISATIONS AND ON-BOARD VESSELS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Perhaps now more than ever before, job stress poses a threat to the health of employees and, in turn, to the health of organizations. This paper highlights knowledge about the causal agents of stress at the workplace and outlines steps that can be adopted to prevent job stress.

Workplace stress has been proven to cause a damaging outcome on the wellness and welfare of employees, as considerably as a negative impact on workplace productivity and profits. There are measures that individuals and organizations can take to alleviate the negative impact of stress, or to stop it from arising in the first place. Nevertheless, employers need to be cognizant of the effects that stress causes on their employees' health as well as on organization profits. This paper is a call to employers to take action on stress levels in the workplace.

Finally, seafaring is a particular profession, in which individuals are commonly revealed to several stresses that are connected to the different duties on board ships. This paper has surveyed the main publications on different factors affecting seafarers with the aim of identifying stress factors. The most significant factors were separated from family, loneliness on board, fatigue, multi-nationality, limited recreation activity, and sleep deprivation.

**KEYWORDS:** Seafarers, Stress At Sea, Psychological Stress, Fatigue, Workplace Stress, Stress Prevention, Stress Management

### **INTRODUCTION**

Work stress is a matter of lively study and is the theme of outstanding functional enterprises. Thus far, it remains to show considerable awkwardness. These contain how to get its proper kind, how to stop its accretion and how it is efficiently managed (Blaug & Kenyon & Lekhil, n.d).

Stress management and prevention should declaim both the employers and their employee. Arranging precautionary standpoint permits both employees and employers to foresee causes of stress and form restraint, instead of merely responding to disaster when it happens ("U.S DHHS", 2005).

As an effect of solitary job environment on board vessels, it is of dominant significant for seafarers to be in the best state of health at all times, then they can respond to any vessels' emergencies. Stress is known here as the physical and psychological condition which is produced because of different reasons, as debated subsequently in this article. This condition, consequence to the individual being incapable to carry out his tasks with the ordinary exertion, effectiveness and precision, in other words, the seafarer under stress is incapable to use his best and entire capability (Sin Wei, n. d).

Workplace stress influencing seafarers, has special features frequently distinct from stress that can be expected in other fields. These contain considerable potential hazards in the shape of incidents, injuries and illnesses (Carotenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

Seafaring is distinguished by objective and subjective stress factors. Subjective factor's base on the self-estimation of the seafarer's own status and on the amount of individual contentment that task outputs. These factors acting as a function in the reason of incidents on vessel are extremely difficult to guess. Objective factors depend on the states on which the task is performed (noise, temperature exchanges, vibration) causing structural, mechanical and physical hazards. Other objective factors are described by organizational and social sides like for example long disconnection from home and families, sleep troubles, absence of job perspectives, routine and immediate responsibility (Carotenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

In most workplaces there is a Human Resource policy and there is no specific stress management plan in place. In this article, I intend to demonstrate the rationale issues of stress, the need to manage stress, and how to manage it. Moreover, I will establish an approach in order to persuade the manager to issue and implement a stress management plan.

## **STRESS AT SEA**

This kind of stress does not address exclusively psychological stress (due to the fact that seafarers deal with stress in the frame of an organization) nor does it address merely organizational stress (the one that possibly mitigated unintentionally in a fewer or larger scope when the person depart the workplace) "Internal staff surveys indicate that 35 per cent of sea going personnel and 25.9 per cent of officer trainees report that there was too much stress associated with their job" (Fairbrother & Warn, 2002).

A realization of the causes of stress recognized in isolated confined environments such as the vessel has been utilized to recognize prominent parts of workplace stress for seafarers.

Physical annoyance is a prominent quality of vessels. Correspondingly, on board vessel exposed metal exteriors control in the physical workplace and seafarers endure constricted and noisy surroundings. Disclosure to environmental situations contain carrying out the task in lack of light, electromagnetic radiation, fuel, vapours, working near to chemicals, harsh motion and high temperature. Moreover, vessels are ideally distant from home and can include extended disconnection from friends and family.

Cadets, for example, have an occupied program on board vessel; their role is challenging and different because there are numerous secondary tasks that have to be included. The vagueness of the trainee role and the various work requirements show that task role is a possible cause of stress. Trainees can be stand opposite to overlapping requirements and also discover that their tasks collide with their sleep and ability to maintain a uniform personal routine.

Incompetent leadership, a collapse in the relationships between individuals and the consequence conflict can be extremely stressful inside the limits of a vessel. But, these are excessive occurrences and show crisis situations. Controlled by ideal functioning conditions in a vessel, these elements are regulated to a great extent by the existence of apparently known job roles.

(Fairbrother & Warn, 2002)

## CAUSES OF STRESS AT SEA

### Fatigue

International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidelines define fatigue as: “A reduction of physical and /or mental condition, resulting from physical stress. It may impair almost all psycho-physical abilities including: power, speed, reaction time, coordination, decision making, and/or emotional balance.” Fatigue is the result of prolonged working days with work watches, inadequate number of crew, and insufficient suitability of the inferior seafarers. Work watches and unexpectedness, which are characteristic shape of life on board vessel, can lead up to fatigue and subsequently to serious hazard of casualties (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

### Loneliness

Social separation is a prime reason of psychological issues. Separation can cause sadness and hopelessness. Defenceless of seafarers has been informed to be a reason of suicide.

To be away from family is one of the major discouraging reasons specified by seafarers. “An interview was conducted on 134 seafarers showed that 59.7 per cent of them consider long separation from family as the main stress factor on board” (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012). Stress degree raise significantly when several family individuals are not healthy or when communications with home are difficult (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

### Sleeping Disturbances

Sleep is established on pertaining to 24 hour cycles. If it is adversely affected it is potential to feel sleepy where as it is essential to be alert or to feel alert at the sleeping period. A great portion of seafarers relate not sleeping good to have constantly disturbed rest.

Seafarer’s task demands a watch system, which has an unfavourable influence on circadian rhythm. Working on 24-hour watch systems on ship on motion raises a number of impediments to acquire adequate renovated sleep. Seafarers may have to work extra hours, sleep when their bodies sense waken, and confront annoyance from vessel movement.

Environmental causes of the vessel like hostile weather states, vibration and noise can spoil sleep goodness. Sleep disorders linked to noise may differ relying on the space in which the seafarers sleep and on their age. Younger seafarers are widely sensible to noise and therefore more tending to sleep claims (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

On top of that, temporary lack of sleep causes a reduction of individual execution for at least three days subsequently to sleeping hours have get back to the ordinary 8 hours per night time without the reduction of performance being observed by the individuals themselves (Sin Wei, n.d).

### Multi-Nationality

Sensitivity to stress in the workplace is connected to several factors, like shortage of supervision, discouragement and unsociable relationships. These factors are entitled to trigger issues that can appear to the attendance of individuals of various nationalities and talking several languages on board the ship. Generally, crews consist of seafarers of various cultural backgrounds, various nationalities and religions (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

### **Limited Recreation Activity**

Seafarers frequently have short free time and this can develop stress. Sports, for instance, can contribute in enhancing psychological and physical welfare and hence could represent a chance to enhance collaboration, support team building and promote social interactions (Carontenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

### **Food or the Quality of Food**

Food, or the quality of food, is another factor that contributes to the onslaught of stress in marine personnel. In a comparison of health-related behaviour and stress at sea and ashore, seamen showed more frequent occurrences of and higher levels of stress at sea than ashore. Poor health due to food of lower nutritional value than ashore results in an individual who is not performing at his optimum. Monitoring the nutritional value of food served on board the different vessels and voyages is recommended. This is a latest factor participating to the attack of stress in seafarers (Sin Wei, n.d).

### **Why do we Need to Manage Stress?**

Stress may contribute to performance decline, struggles, bad relationships, workplace conflict, harm and accidents. Other problems that could be taken into consideration which contain the organisation's exterior relationships are poor public relationships, chance of spoilage to reputation, capability to hire and keep fineness seafarers ("Cipd", 2008).

### **Preventing the Workplace Stress**

No incorporated approaches or straightforward handbooks work out for improving a stress prevention plan. Plan formulation and proper explanations will be affected by various elements such as the intricacy and the enlargement of the organization, available resources and particularly the exclusive kinds of stress issues confronted by the organization.

In spite of the fact that it is not feasible to provide a worldwide recipe for hindering stress at work, it is potential to present outlines on the procedure of stress prevention in organizations. In all circumstances, the procedure for stress prevention plans includes three featured steps: problem identification, intervention and evaluation ("Cipd", 2008).

### **Step 1 – Identify the Problem**

The most successful plans of action to examine the extent and origin of a suspicious stress issue in an organisation rely to some extent on the size of the organisation and the available resources. Group conversations between managers, workers representatives and employees may give fruitful sources of information ("Cipd", 2008).

Whatever the technique applied to gather data, information must be acquired about workers feelings of their task circumstances and recognized levels of stress. Data originated in statistical studies, debates, conversations and other sources must be abstracted and examined to respond queries about the locality of stress issue and task situations that can be accountable. Data examination, statically studies model and other sides of a stress prevention plan can call for the assistance of specialist from a counselling company or local institution. But inclusive influences for the prevention plan must stay in the organisation ("Cipd", 2008).

### **Step 2 – Design and Implement Intervention**

At the moment that the origins of stress at workplace have been verified and the extent of the issue is comprehended, the phase is established for design and implementation of an intervention plan ("Cipd", 2008).

There are three major kinds of stress management interventions applied in organisations – primary, secondary and tertiary (“Health and Safety Authority”, 2009).

### **Primary Intervention (Preventing)**

This process examines the origin of stress to hinder it from happening. It generally includes some format of organisation, wide change in the framework of task, in other words, it is the designing of how, what and or who does what (“Health and Safety Authority”, 2009).

### **Secondary Interventions (Management)**

This process concentrates on the worker during his time with the organisation. It contains parts of task like practice for the work, practice in health and safety in general; pack up in provisions of extending appropriate management of the technical and public sides of a worker’s working life. This valid management training has function both in hindering stress and assisting stress workers to recuperate (“Health and Safety Authority”, 2009).

### **Tertiary Intervention (Minimisation)**

This process concentrates on the term of consulting and worker assist plans or backup services from outside to help workers who require a necessity for additional backup, in addition to that included in the human resource proceedings. Integration of all three interventions is mostly recommended, instead of concentrating merely on any one to the exception of all others. Furthermore, prior to any interventions, workers must be acquainted about activities that will be carried out and when they will happen (“Health and Safety Authority”, 2009).

### **Step 3 – Evaluate the Intervention**

Evaluation is a fundamental process in the intervention plan. Evaluation is essential to conclude if the intervention is presenting desirable impacts and if alterations in trend are required.

Time frameworks for evaluating interventions must be settled. Interventions including organisational change must get both short term and long term inspection. Short term evaluations carried out to set an early sign of plan efficiency or potential requirement for readdressing, long term evaluations are substantial to conclude if interventions output continuing impacts.

Evaluations must concentrate on the same kinds of data gathered throughout the problem identification step of the interventions, involving data from workers regarding health issues, contentment, and degrees of noticed stress and working situations.

The workplace stress prevention plan does not finish with evaluation. Slightly, workplace stress prevention must be comprehended as a successive plan that uses evaluation information to amend or improve the intervention strategy.

(“Health and Safety Authority”, 2009)

### **Convincing the Organisation to take Action**

One of the difficult and stimulating tasks to managing stress in the workplace can be acquiring approval at management level; and, still when senior management is providing assistance, there could be others in the organisation that need to be convinced (“Cipd”, 2008).

## **Who Need to be Convinced?**

In plenty organisations, the most difficult part of dealing with stress is obtaining top management approval. Being called for their opinions, workers anticipate action to be taken and, when it's not, this may produce disconnecting, disillusionment and a more harmful condition than prior to the initiated plan ("Cipd", 2008).

### **6.2- What Would Convince Them?**

Significant to effective convincing is to select the rationales that are most probably to be of concern to your specific host. In carrying out this option, it is valued taking into account both the individual perspective and the business imperative ("Cipd", 2008)

#### **The Individual Perspective**

Workers might be concerned in the interests they will profit from decreasing their fellow workers and their own stress and might prefer to sense that their organisation looks after their health ("Cipd", 2008).

#### **The Business Imperative**

For a lot of organisations, some format of financial or economical argument is crucial to support any investment in stress management activities.

For many organisations, the hazards united with issues connected to stress, like hazard to reputation, hazards of lawful cases or hazard of causalities are the energetic inducement to do something. Therefore, surveys on the related negative effects and or lawful expenses will be very remarkable. Other organisations are in particular eager to be known as a moral employer because they have a powerful corporate social responsibility program ("Cipd", 2008).

## **How Can You Convince Them?**

### **Set the Existing Condition**

A great number of people is opposed to stress management because of the absence of comprehending of what stress is, the effect it may have and what could be done to deal with it. Many can be afraid of handling stress, in this situation clearness about the hazards of not handling stress and reaffirmation that stress can be efficiently managed will be significant.

Even though your organisation is not presently executing interventions particularly concentrated on stress, it can have human resource exercises which assist to manage stress in spite of the fact that this is not their evident target ("Cipd", 2008).

### **Use of Proper Communication Channel**

Taking into account your audiences and the intimations you want to reveal, select communication techniques which are almost certainly to be efficient such as announcement, employees meetings, intranet, publications, personal conversations and presentations and so on ("Cipd", 2008).

### **Keep on Acquiring Approval**

The requirement to contact and convince does not end when you get the permission to proceed with putting into effect your plans. It is crucial to continue giving support through outstanding communication and findings ("Cipd", 2008).

## CONCLUSIONS

As the psychological and corporal health of workers are torturing as a result of unwell workplaces, stress is yet considered as an indication of failure in many organisations, and is maintained silent in order to escape unfavourable reverberations. Stress is inclined to be discarded or neglected by the persons who are supposed to do something regarding it (Bickford, 2005).

Workplace stress is becoming more and more expensive. It has several reasons, and these include sophisticated collection of psychological, physical and social factors. Irrespective of what its exact type, stress in these days puts consequential pressures on organisation to improve techniques for its efficient prevention and management (Blaug & Kenyon & Lekhil, n.d).

To reduce the damaging impacts of stress in both workers and organisations, organisations must endeavour to address and recognize the reasons of workplace stress. A cooperative approach by workers and organisation to identify workplace stress should enhance the welfare and health of the workforce ("Medibank", 2008). Therefore identifying workplace stress is in everybody's benefit ("Health and Safety Authority", 2005).

In case of applying good rules, a true enhancement in the psychological health of employees may be guaranteed. Seafarers should derive benefit from implementing stress management plan to decrease elements formerly specified, like loneliness and compulsive eating to enhance proper expression of feelings, resolving problems, sensing of value and quality of life. If the application is done using competent methodology, like interventions may as well be inferred to comparable backgrounds to enhance, as possible, the awkwardness linked to specific tasks and actions (Carotenuto & Molino & Fasanato & Amenta, 2012).

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