Effective Ergonomics Project on Implementation of FITS™ Office Ergonomics Program

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1. Introduction

Office ergonomics has been a popular topic in the office setting for the prevention of musculoskeletal injuries for office employees. The Occupational Safety and Health (Display Screen Equipment) Regulation enacted in Hong Kong in 2003 (Chim, 2014b) and the Regulation aims at protecting the occupational safety and health of employees who use computer for prolonged periods of time. In the recent survey conducted by Chim’s Ergonomics and Safety Limited, Hong Kong, 73% of 618 employees spent at least six hours a day in using computer at work and over 80% of survey employees reported musculoskeletal symptoms in at least one body region (Chim, 2013). A systematic office ergonomics program shall be implemented to be compliant with the Regulation as well as to promote healthy computing effectively in the workplace.

2. Aims

The paper summarizes the case experience in the implementation of FITS™ Office Ergonomics Program (Chim, 2014a) in Hong Kong in a multinational corporation. The main purpose of this paper is to describe the systematic implementation of well-structured office ergonomics program and to report the employees’ feedback to the program.

3. Methods

The FITS™ Office Ergonomics Program includes four elements: (1) F: Furniture Evaluation and Selection; (2) I: Individual Workstation Assessment; (3) T: Training and Education; (4) S: Stretching Exercises and Rest Breaks. During the design of a new office for an expanding multinational corporation, the certified professional ergonomist was involved in the workplace mock-up evaluation and furniture fitting to user evaluation. Then, the ergonomist conducted 168 onsite individual workstation assessments after being moved into a newly setup office. Office ergonomics and stretching exercise trainings were also provided to the employees for voluntary participation. Feedback from participants was collected from the employees for program evaluation.

4. Findings & Discussion

The discomfort survey showed that 85% of office employees reported musculoskeletal discomfort. Among reported cases, 48% received/receiving treatments for musculoskeletal discomfort. There were four sessions of office ergonomics and stretching exercise trainings being conducted and 27% of work computer users attended the sessions. 49% of participants reported that they learned more than expected form the trainings and 47% of them reported that they learned as much as expected. A total of 99% of the participants rated the overall rating of the training on “very good”, “excellent” and “good”. After the FITS™ Office Ergonomics Program was implemented for two years, there were no reported cases of musculoskeletal concerns from the program participants. The corporation was advised to sustain the best practice on promoting office ergonomics and to include the product ergonomic evaluation in the procurement procedures and promote stretching exercise.
5. Conclusions

In conclusion, a well-designed office ergonomics program is the key of the success. In addition, a well-developed office ergonomics program with support by the corporation can expect a positive result in promoting healthy computing and to prevent musculoskeletal reporting in the office setting.

References