

Low-cost risk reduction strategy for small workplaces: how can we spread good practices?

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KEY WORDS

Good practices; SME; health risk

SUMMARY

Recent advances in health risk reduction approaches are examined based on inter-country networking experiences. A noteworthy progress is the wider application of low-cost improvements to risk reduction particularly in small enterprises and agriculture in both industrially developing and developed countries. This is helped by the readiness of managers and workers to implement these improvements despite many constraints. Typical improvements include mobile racks, simple workstation changes, screening hazards, better welfare facilities and teamwork arrangements. In view of the complex circumstances of work-related health risks, it is important to know whether a low-cost strategy can advance risk reduction practices effectively and what support measures are necessary. It is confirmed that the strategy can overcome related constraints through its advantages. Main advantages lie in (a) the facilitation of improved practices in multiple technical areas, (b) the strengthening of realistic stepwise risk reduction, and (c) the enhanced multiplier effects through training of local trainers. Action-oriented risk assessment tools, such as action checklists and low-cost improvement guides, can encourage risk-reducing measures adjusted to each local situation. It is suggested to spread the low-cost risk reduction strategy for improving small workplaces in diversified settings with the support of these locally tailored tools.