

THE APPLICATION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE AS A TOOL FOR THE RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE HOTEL WORKPLACE (PRELIMINARY REPORT)

D. Pantelakis, E. Velonakis, V. Trianti

GEP S.A. (Health, Safety and Environmental Services)

INTRODUCTION:

It is known that in the working environment of hotels and restaurants there is a very low rate of occupational diseases (estimated at about 12/100.000, while in industrial activities the ratio rises to about 318/100.000).

On the other hand, the workers of the hotel sector accuse often complaints that could be attributed to low exposure at a combination of multiple and various factors, resulting not in disease, but in discomfort.

AIM:

In order to assess the work-related stress and the level of discomfort, as well as in order to evaluate the work-related risk as perceived by the workers, a questionnaire was elaborated and applied to the workers of a hotel.

POPULATION, MATERIAL AND METHOD (I):

117 employees out of 180 accepted to be interviewed, of whom 38 (32,4%) were chambermaids, 21 (17,9%) worked in the laundry and linen department, 23 (19,65%) in technical maintenance, 18 (15,4%) in the restaurant and 17 (14,5%) were office-workers.

The medical anamnesis of the workers was compiled, with particular attention to pathology or complaints of the muscle-skeletal, respiratory and circulatory systems.

The workers were asked to evaluate their working environment as for the following parameters.

POPULATION, MATERIAL AND METHOD (II):

Parameters to be evaluated in the workplace:

- ◆ Air exchange – indoor climate
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Illumination
- ◆ Odours or dust

- ◆ Work-load
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Hygienic conditions (lavatories, rest & refreshment facilities for changing clothes etc.)
- ◆ Information and training about the job-related risks

For each parameter, the worker was called to quantify the existence of a problem by defining it as:

a) irrelevant b) relative c) serious.

POPULATION, MATERIAL AND METHOD (III):

An overall evaluation of the answers was made and then the answers given by each group were analyzed separately: chambermaids, laundry, technicians, waiters and office employees.

The questionnaires were considered for each item separately.

RESULTS-OVERALL EVALUATION:

◆ A lack of information – education and training about the job-related risks, emerged for all the employees (100%).

◆ A significant percentage of the personnel (37 workers, 31,6%) referred to repeated episodes or ascertained pathology regarding the muscle-skeletal system (mainly lombosciatalgy and tendonitis).

◆ A significant percentage of the personnel (29 employees, 24,8%) referred to psychological discomfort because of Job-overload.

◆ More than half of the workers (85 employees, 72,6%) consider that the facilities for the personnel are insufficient and/or inadequate.

CONCLUSION:

◆ A first application of the questionnaire aimed to estimate the job-related stress of the workers in the hotel sector.

◆ A consideration of the results showed that the more significant problems as perceived by the workers are related to the manual handling of loads, to job-related stress and to particular working environment (ex.: laundry).

◆ Furthermore, we consider that great part of the emerging lack of work-content is due to the complete absence of adequate formation-information of the workers and to the poor conditions of the facilities at the disposition of the personnel.

We think that this questionnaire is a useful tool for the evaluation of the job-related risk and its first application encourages us to proceed with a more elaborated method (institution of an algorithm) for further application on a more consistent population.