Psychosocial Factors at Work: Worker Health vs Productivity

Professor Maureen Dollard
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A World Health Organization Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health

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Fat Cat Wednesday 2017

Welcome back to work. FTSE100 bosses will have already clocked up an average annual UK salary by lunchtime today.

"Over a thousand pounds an hour..."

Fat Cat Wednesday 2017

- Top bosses will already have made more money by the first Wednesday of 2017 than the typical UK worker will earn all year
- The average pay ratio between FTSE100 CEOs and the average total pay of their employees in 2015 was 129:1
- Making the publication of pay ratios compulsory will help track progress on closing this gap

It’s Fat Cat Wednesday (4.1.2017). After just two and a half days Britain’s top bosses will have made more money than the average UK worker earns in an entire year, according to High Pay Centre calculations.

HTTP://HIGHPAYCENTRE.ORG

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Note: Data for all countries exclude capital gains.
Changes and Challenge

- Maintaining a mentally healthy and productive workforce in a global competitive economy is a big challenge for Australia and other capitalist economies.

- Productivity improvement approaches emphasise reducing inefficiencies, increasing work pressure, reducing job security, and stabilising or reducing wages while bolstering CEO salaries and increasing profits and shareholder value.

- For workers these approaches are likely accompanied by reduced meaningfulness of work, decrements to worker health, increased psychological distress, increased workplace bullying, work-family conflict, and workers compensation costs.

- Yet these developments are at odds with health and safety as a fundamental human right, and the most basic ethic of “do no harm”.

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Outline

1. State of Affairs
2. Causes of Work Stress
3. PSC Theory and Evidence
4. The Value of PSC - The Human and Economic Case
5. Where Does PSC Come From?
6. Solutions - What Can Be Done?
1. State of Affairs

• Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), managers must take reasonable action to identify, assess and control exposure to hazards and risks (both physical and psychological).

• It is therefore important that we monitor and address psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace.

• This is critical for maintaining the wellbeing of individual employees, and also for ensuring workplaces are as productive and high performing as possible.

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The nested nature of reality

• The focus has been largely on the individual-resilience

• My argument need to look at the context, person, nested in a job, in an organisation, in a society (one inside the other)

• Likely to have a more far reaching effect on worker health and productivity if look at sources further upstream than job design and individual factors

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Cost of Work Stress

- Mental stress claims in the Australian Public Service, 88% increased 88% from 2009 to 2014 (Comcare (2015)).
- Stress claims accounted for 13% of claims but 43% of costs
- Average cost of $291,000 (22% exceeded $500,000).
- Only increase in the frequency of serious claims since 2000-01 is mental disorders (Safe Work Australia, 2017)
- Mental health conditions cost to Australian businesses is nearly $11 billion per year due to absenteeism, presenteeism and compensation claims (Pricewaterhouse Cooper, 2014).
Cost of Work Stress

• Beyondblue, astonishing statistics in *The State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia* (Beyondblue, 2014):
  • Only 52% of Australian workers consider their workplace to be mentally healthy; 56% believe that their most senior leaders value their mental health.
  • Mental and physical health problems, cardiovascular disease, depression, suicide.
2. Causes of Work Stress

• An inevitable problem in a growth & competition, economic model
“I’ve been nursing for nearly 40 years and I think that the pressure over those years outweighs the rewards, but it is still a rewarding career, and its very collegial. But there’s certainly one day out of ten that I would say; ‘jee, I feel really great today, I’ve had a lovely day, and my patients really loved me, and thanked me,’ and I’ll have nine days out of ten where I’ll say; ‘I felt pressured today, I felt unsafe at times, I felt overworked, and my patients were lashing out at me…’ and I’m the person that takes the brunt of that home at the end of the day.”
What worker characteristics are required for these ‘dispossessed’ environments?

• According to a managing director of an Australian call centre there are two types of people who make successful cold callers
  1) extroverts because they thrive on interactions with others, and
  2) psychopaths because they are not emotionally hurt by constant rejection (Warne-Smith, 2006).
• Should we select for these characteristics?
• How are we to work in such environments?

Multi-level model of psychosocial factors at work (Dollard, 2013)

Globalization
National Political Power Relations
(Unions, Corporations, Government, Political parties, NGOs, Community associations)
National Culture
Corruption

Psychosocial Safety Climate (Policies, practices and procedures for psychological health)
Workers Health (Distress, Depression, Anxiety, Anger, Suicide, Cardiovascular disease, MSDs, Injuries)

Employment Conditions
(Full employment, Precarious employment, Informal employment, Child labour, Slavery & bonded labour)

Psychosocial Work Conditions
(Workload, Work hours, Job control, Job insecurity, Bullying, Violence, Shift work, Work intensification, Repetitive tasks, Inadequate rewards, Injustice, Work-life conflict, Technology interface)

Income Inequality

Labor market policies
(Labor regulations, Industrial relations)
Welfare state policies
(Social policies)

Policies

Health Related Behaviors
(Lifestyle, Medication, Workaholism) Gender, Age

Social and Family Networks
Health Systems

Fig. 1.3
Dollard, M.F., Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. Bin, Brough, P., Tuckey, M.R (Eds.), (2014). Psychosocial Factors at Work in the Asia Pacific Dordrecht; Springer International Publishing. 978-94-017-8974-5
Layers of influence on worker health

- Individual
- Job design
- Organisational
- External

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The Cause of the Causes

Where does job design come from?

Extended Health Erosion Path

Demands → Psychological Health

Extended Motivational Path

Resources → Engagement

Job Demands-Resources Model
Demerouti, Bakker et al., 2001

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Psychosocial safety climate: a multilevel theory of work stress in the health and community service sector

M. F. Dollard* and W. McTernan
3. PSC Theory and Evidence
Psychosocial Safety Climate

*Psychosocial safety climate (PSC)* refers to shared perceptions regarding policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety.

Competing Values—worker health, a balance of productivity and worker health.
Management commitment
1. In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees’ psychological health
2. Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees’ psychological status is raised
3. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment

Priority
4. Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organization
5. Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance
6. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity

Communication
7. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which effect me
8. Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to my attention by my manager/supervisor
9. My contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organization are listened to

Participation and involvement
10. Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees’, unions and health and safety representatives in my workplace
11. Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters
12. In my organization, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organization

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the Evidence

Controls for Time 1 Dependent measures

N = 262 Time1; N = 196, Time 2
18 schools

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Psychosocial safety climate as an antecedent of work characteristics and psychological strain: A multilevel model

Sample T1 (N = 202)  Sample T2 (N = 163)

- Independent samples matched by work unit (N = 48)
- Time 1 → Time 2 24 months

Main effects and mediation model

(2012). Maureen F. Dollard, Tessa Opie, Sue Lenthall, John Wakeman, Sabina Knight, Sandra Dunn, Greg Rickard & Martha MacLeod
Bullying

• PSC predicts bullying—mainly perpetrated by managers—productivity hypothesis
• PSC predicts bullying prognosis (e.g., resolution vs leave job)

• 214 SA hospital employees (18 teams)
• PSC team level was significantly negatively related to registered team work injury rates.
• And under-reporting
• Only 36% concordance rate between registered and self-reported injuries

Psychosocial Safety Climate; Cross-level effects

Between Agency Effects

Senior Executive Psychosocial Safety Climate

Middle Manager Psychosocial Safety Climate

Individual Worker PSC

Responses

- Senior Executive
- Middle Manager
- Worker

25 agencies, 394 work units.
268 senior executives, 1895 middle managers, 4815 workers.
21 agencies, 394 work units.
268 senior executives, 1895 middle managers, 4815 workers.
Tests a three-way interaction

Demands $X$ resources (in the context of PSC)
Psychosocial safety climate: a multilevel theory of work stress in the health and community service sector

M. F. Dollard* and W. McTernan
Climate congruence: How espoused and enacted psychosocial safety climate affects emotional exhaustion

Yulita, Awang Idris, University Malaya, Maureen Dollard, University of South Australia
Safety Science (In revision)

- 23 schools in Selangor, Malaysia
- 109 secondary school teachers across
- 545 diary data points - five consecutive days from

Figure. The interaction of espoused PSC and enacted managerial support predicting emotional exhaustion

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4. The Value of PSC-Human and Economic Case

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Australian Workplace Barometer

• National surveillance on working conditions among 7331 Australian workers, 3 waves of data
• Repeated measures for 3916 participants
• 2014/2015 data for 4242 Australia wide

- Funded by Safe Work Australia, SafeWork SA, ARC Discovery Grant, ARC Linkage Grant
Australian and European Bullying Rates

Europe (European Working Conditions Survey 2010)
q71b. Over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to bullying /harassment?
N = 41,034, Employed only

Bullying is a problem at some work-places and for some workers. To label something, as bullying, the offensive behaviour has to occur repeatedly over a period of time, and the person confronted has to experience difficulties defending him or herself. The behaviour is not bullying if two parties of approximate equal “strength” are in conflict or the incident is an isolated event.

Have you been subjected to bullying at the workplace during the last six months?
N = 5919, Employed only 2009-2011
N = 4242, Employed only 2014/2015

Australia (AWB 2009-2014/2015)
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©Maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au University of South Australia, Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety, AWB Project
A National Standard for Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC): PSC 41 as the Benchmark for Low Risk of Job Strain and Depressive Symptoms

Tessa S. Bailey, Maureen F. Dollard, and Penny A. M. Richards
University of South Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Standards</th>
<th>Range 12 – 60</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low risk PSC</td>
<td>41 or above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium risk PSC</td>
<td>38 – 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High risk PSC</td>
<td>37 or below</td>
<td>(35% of respondents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elimination of low PSC – 14% reduction in job strain
16% reduction in depression
## Using PSC to estimate productivity loss

(Becher & Dollard, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers PSC</th>
<th>Annual sickness absence (hours)</th>
<th>Cost via sickness absence</th>
<th>Productivity Loss</th>
<th>Cost via presenteeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>$2,109</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>$3,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>$2,067</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>$3,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>$1,479</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>$1,856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost of low PSC via sickness absence: AUD 2.4 billion p.a.
Cost of low PSC via presenteeism: AUD 3.6 billion p.a.
Total cost of low PSC to employers: AUD 6 billion p.a.
PSC and workers’ compensation in South Australia

Harry Becher and Maureen Dollard

- Australian Workplace Barometer linked to workers’ compensation claim data from Safework SA.
- Data were aggregated to the organisational level in both datasets.
- Matched data for 135 organisations.

- PSC has been dichotomized between low to moderate PSC (PSC < 41) and high PSC (PSC ≥ 41).
- PSC was measured in 2010, workers compensation claims include those made between 2010 and 2015.
- Days lost was log transformed to meet the assumption of normality for inferential testing.
- Only includes claims with lost days.
- Organisations with low or moderate PSC significantly more average days lost per workers compensation claim than high PSC \( t(133) = 2.05, \) Cohen’s \( d = 0.35 \).
PSC and Workers’ Compensation in South Australia

Harry Becher and Maureen Dollard

Demographic variables (Socioeconomic status, gender, and age) were controlled in all analyses.

PSC was measured in 2010, workers compensation claims include those made between 2011 and 2014.

PSC and Workers’ Compensation Expenditure

PSC levels in organisations (AWB data) is significantly linked to Expenditure in SafeWork SA data.

The average compensation claim in SA is $16,753.

The average PSC in this sample was 38.

Each PSC point above 38 can save approximately $580.

In a company with low PSC of 28 we expect average claim cost of $22,550.

In a company with a high PSC of 48 we expect average claim cost of $10,955.

The really amazing thing about this research is that we can predict future WC Expenditure by knowing about company PSC.
PSC and workers’ compensation in South Australia

Harry Becher and Maureen Dollard

Demographic variables (Socioeconomic status, gender, and age) were controlled in all analyses. PSC was measured in 2010, workers compensation claims include those made between 2011 and 2014.

PSC and Return To Work Time

- PSC level in organisations (AWB data) is significantly linked to Return To Work Time (Safework SA data)
- The average Return To Work time in SA is 30.5 days.
- Each PSC point above 38 we expect will save approximately 2.16 RTW days.
- In a company with a low PSC of 28 we expect average RTW 52 days.
- In a company with a high PSC of 48 we expect an average RTW 9 days.

The really amazing thing about this research is that we can predict future RTW and expenditure by knowing about company PSC.
workgroups about what constitutes appropriate leave behaviour, and timely support for managers from corporate areas on managing attendance in the workplace are also important factors.

Interactive Chart: Sick leave and Psychosocial Safety Climate score

Learn more about this chart: view data for Figure 4.

![Interactive Chart: Sick leave and Psychosocial Safety Climate score](chart.png)

This is an interactive chart: hover over the coloured diamonds to view data.

A correlation exists between the PSC score for an agency and the number of sick leave days taken by their employees.
2010-2011 n = 1062 2014-2015

Psychosocial Safety Climate T1

Bullying T1

Psychological Health Problems T2

PSC Enacted
Mistreatment Climate T2
Work Design T2
Conflict resolution T2

Bullying T2

\[ r = 0.06^* \]

\[ r = 0.41^{***} \]

\[ r = 0.08^* \]

\[ r = 0.30^{***} \]
Predicting Happiness in Australian Workers Over 5 years, 2014-2015 (National Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.61</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.949</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychosocial Safety Climate</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>4.78***</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-3.51***</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Discretion (Control)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.28*</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender, 1 = Males, 2 = Females

N = 1139

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Starting PSC Levels affects Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psychosocial safety climate T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sessions attended T2</td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop quality T2</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention quality T3</td>
<td>.68**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention progress T3</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Outstanding is the question...
6. Where does PSC come from?

The cause of the cause of the cause of the cause

The context
Using the ESENER data, 28,000 establishments with more than 10 employees—most senior OSH managers. Questions were:

1. "Does your establishment have a procedure to deal with, work-related stress?"
2. "bullying or harassment?"
3. "work-related violence?"
4. "What about the role of employees: Have they been consulted regarding measures to deal with psychosocial risks?" and
5. "Are employees encouraged to participate actively in the implementation and evaluation of the measures?"

Alpha was .87.
23 per cent of variance in PSC is due to country.
Worker health is good for the economy: Union density and psychosocial safety climate as determinants of country differences in worker health and productivity in 31 European countries

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Centre for Applied Psychological Research, School of Psychology, Social Work and Social Policy, University of South Australia, Magill Campus, Adelaide, Australia

Social Science & Medicine

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect
Social Science & Medicine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/sssmed

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* proposed by Benach et al., 2007

** tested empirically

Solid boxes reflect the final model, different shades reflect different data sources

*/*** Beta values significant in final model, P < .05; P < .001
Findings

- Main reasons for dealing with OHS risks were Legal Requirements (63%), requests from employees or representatives (45%), and absence rates (18%).

- Type of society, social and economic factors (e.g., welfare regimes, work related policies) explain in part national differences in workplace protection (PSC).
7. Solutions-What can be done?
Solutions—Ethical leadership

- Ethical leadership training-refers to leading in a manner that respects human rights and dignity (Ciulla, 2004), and
- Concerns how leaders use their social power in the decisions they make and the actions they implement (Resick, et al, 2006).
- Ethical Utilitarian consequentialism greatest good for the majority means balance of worker health and productivity

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SA Hospitals 2015-2016, with a 5-month lag between measurement points.

57 teams, 57 leaders, 365 health care workers, at least 3 employees per ward at 3 time points

Dollard, McLinton et al
Organisational Resilience

• Organisational resilience reflects the capacity of the organisation to cope with challenge, through flexible, adaptable and interactive systems, with psychosocial care.

• Organisational resilience will be evident as better PSC, improved job design elements, improved employee health and resilience and improved work outcomes.

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Healthy Conducive Production Model

Environment

Organisation

Social Level Controller
Collective/Management

Conducive production
Strong PSC

Neg-Entropy

External resources, Expected, controllable

Controller Management
Political will
Resources
Union relations
Surplus

External demands Random, Unexpected, Uncontrollable

Neg-Entropy

Neg-Entropy Spiral Sub-coordination possible Strong PSC

Dollard & Karasek, 2008

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Solutions; Sustainable workplace change focuses on improving PSC

- Top management support
- Build on current systems
- Involve all levels
- Participation and Participatory approaches
- Social dialogue with all stakeholders
- Communication up and down
- Risk assessment
- Change culture, leadership competency (ILO report)
PSC Hierarchy of Control

Senior management values: Organisational policy and procedure

Organisational development: Human resource management, injury prevention, injury management, OHS units

Leadership: Middle management implementation and supervisor support

Job design: Demands, controls, support, resources

Worker

Management Priority

Management Commitment

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

TERTIARY

Tessa Bailey et al
Take home points

• Work stressors are preventable
• Psychosocial safety climate is a leading risk factor, best target for intervention, a KPI for strategic management
• A form of ethical values based leadership—needs to be checked
• Build organisational resilience
Future UniSA Course

• A specialisation consisting of 12 WHS courses (which will include the psychology placement and work and organisational psychology courses and, as well, psychophysiology of sleep and health psychology courses).

• Combines the best of engineering and psychology to train accredited WHS professionals. It will be an undergraduate degree (there are only four others in the country), with an online/intensive option and compared to existing programs will have a stronger focus on the ‘psychology’ rather than ‘hazards’ edge of WHS.
Thank You for Listening!

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Published Papers on PSC

Books/ Book Chapters
Dollard, M.F., Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. Bin, Brough, P., Tuckey, M.R (Eds.), (2014). *Psychosocial Factors at Work in the Asia Pacific*. Dordrecht; Springer International Publishing. 978-94-017-8974-5
Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd


Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd

Refereed Journal Articles

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Dollard, M. F., Nesan, D. Y. (2013). Worker health is good for the economy: Union density and psychosocial safety climate as determinants of country differences in worker health and productivity in 31 European countries. *Social Science and Medicine, 92*, 114-123.


GHQ-12 and Emotional Exhaustion

**Psychological Distress**

- **Time 1**: Oct 04
- **Time 2**: Dec 04
- **Time 3**: Sept 05

**Emotional Exhaustion**

- **Time 1**: Oct 04
- **Time 2**: Dec 04
- **Time 3**: Sept 05

Estimated Marginal Means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Facilitated</th>
<th>Control</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACTOR1</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Marginal Means of EE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>321</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Work Stress Intervention Vic DET
Building PSC-APSC 2016

• Having senior leaders actively promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

• Incorporating messages in agency-wide communications from the senior leadership that reinforce the importance of employee health and wellbeing, particularly mental health.

• Ensuring a regular and routine flow of information from management to employees about psychological safety risks in the workplace.

• Actively promoting stress prevention at all levels, particularly through middle management/executive level staff.

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Work Stress Prevention: Risk Assessment

Supported by legislative frameworks

1. Evidence based-problem solving process (PAR)
2. Problem identification and risk-assessment (e.g., Australian Workplace Barometer risk assessment tool/ HSE Management Standards (Kelly et al)
3. Choice of measures and planning of intervention (controls)
4. Implementation of interventions & evaluation (Nielsen et al)
5. Review of information needs and training needs of employees exposed to hazards (Cox & Griffiths).
6. Change culture, leadership competency (ILO report)
Although current evidence suggests that organisational interventions are not as effective as individual level interventions in reducing psychosocial risks and psychological health of workers, this runs counter to substantial theory.

### Organizational Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>High PSC Intervention</th>
<th>Low PSC Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Demands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Ill-Health</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Significant difference between intervention and control groups <.05.

Revolutionary! The research suggests a paradigm shift in the evaluation of work stress interventions away from traditional models, (JDC, JDR, ERI) to the PSC framework/ template.