



Abstracts/Résumés

The Design And Evaluation Of A Joint Health And Safety Committee Education Programme In The Healthcare Sector In Western Canada

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In spite of the long-term existence of joint committees, injury rates appear to be increasing in the healthcare sector. The purpose of this study was to deliver and evaluate a province-wide joint committee (JC) education program for healthcare institutions BC. The joint committee education program was designed with input from labour and management representatives and expert advice from compensation, union, and human resources consultants. The training program was designed to: 1) ensure that committee members fully understood their roles and responsibilities as outlined under the Workers' Compensation Act and Regulations, 2) increase the problem solving skills of committee members, 3) improve the committee's ability in identifying and resolving health and safety concerns in their workplace. Between June and December 2000, 1,206 JC members, (employed at 262 different healthcare facilities), were trained. An evaluation survey, designed as a retrospective before and after study, to evaluate whether the JC training sessions had produced changes in committee functioning was conducted from 7 to 15 months after the training (during the period July 2001 to September 2001) by two trained telephone interviewers. While the level of JC functioning was quite high most institutions prior to training the evaluation survey found large and statistically significant improvements in JC functioning. A 39.5% increase in the proportion of respondents reporting "high" marks for JC effectiveness in identifying hazards and an increase of 50% reporting "high" marks for understanding the JCs role were observed. Increases in the proportion of respondents reporting "high" marks for accuracy of JC minutes, specificity of recommendations, and perhaps most importantly, degrees of cooperation among JC members were in the 20 percent range. IN conclusion this province-wide training of JC members in healthcare institutions increased the functioning of JCs in key areas.

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