

PAKT – Programm Arbeit Rücken Gesundheit

Abstract:

Facing a world of work in which musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are still one of, if not the most frequently mentioned reason(s) for work incapacity (e.g. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2008), the question remains, how effective and practically relevant prevention programs for MSDs should look like and how these programs can be established. The project PAKT is following a twofold approach towards the prevention of work-related MSDs in that it is focussing on gaining theoretical insights as well as transforming these insights into practical solutions for the associated companies within a multidimensional framework. The study takes place in 12 local waste management and sanitation companies in Germany. It aims at developing a sustainable MSD-prevention concept, including organisational and personal measures, which is easily applicable for practitioners and which grounds on the survey feedback method (Becker & Langosch, 2002). In the long run, companies should be able to identify and implement, specifically useful MSD prevention measures for the company at hand in its existing workplace health promotion activities.

So far, the project conducted interviews with company representatives from all hierarchy levels as well as a questionnaire survey focussing on the employees to assess meaningful and resilient data. This serves as the basis for deriving adequate MSD-prevention measures.

Preliminary results reveal that the prevention of MSDs in waste management and sanitation companies cannot be reduced to a single action. Instead, a multi-channel approach including the development of personal competencies at all hierarchy levels, improvements concerning organizational variables (e.g. working hours arrangements, information management) and the establishment of assistance systems outside the company seem to be most appropriate.