

Research Institute of Public Health

Prevention and intervention of neck pain

Prevention and intervention of neck pain in Swiss office workers (NEXpro)

Background

Non-specific neck pain is a widespread disease, especially among office workers. It reduces physical well-being, quality of life and job satisfaction and has a negative impact on productivity in the form of health-related reduced presenteeism and absenteeism.

Various studies have shown the high prevalence of neck pain among Swiss office workers. There is still insufficient scientific research on which measures prevent or reduce pain and increase the productivity of those affected. Results of various recent studies indicate that exercises to strengthen the neck and an adjustment of the workplace according to ergonomic guidelines can have a positive effect on the problem. It is still unclear which are the “best” measures.

Objective

This four-year project, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, is the first to investigate the impact of an evidence-based, multi-component intervention to increase neck health in Swiss office workers. The primary goal of the study is to increase work productivity. Participants should be enabled to reduce their work productivity losses (presenteeism and absenteeism) caused by neck pain. Furthermore, neck pain and neck disability are to be reduced and the quality of life improved. Last but not least, the

project aims to develop a measure that addresses several issues and can be easily implemented in the workplace.

Method and procedure

The study will be conducted at the workstation of office workers of three medium-sized organizations in the cantons of Zurich and Aargau. A stepped-wedge procedure is used: Participating office workers are divided into groups based on their workplace needs, all of which undergo the intervention and control phases. The intervention consists of four components:

- (a) Theoretical health promotion information with practical exercises (workshops),
- (b) Workstation analysis and adjustment according to ergonomic guidelines,
- (c) specific strength training (neck and shoulder exercises), and
- (d) Feedback and support using a smartphone application.

The intervention is implemented and supervised by health and exercise scientists and physiotherapists.

Results

After study completion, results will be published in appropriate national and international journals.

Further information

- zhaw.ch/praevention-und-intervention
- [Measuring headache and headache-related dysfunction in Swiss office workers](#)

Project management

Prof. Dr. med. Markus Melloh

Project duration

2019 – 2023

Funding

[Swiss National Science Foundation \(SNSF\)](#)

Status

Ongoing

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