



Editorial

Psychosocial risk prevention strategies in the workplace

EJOHN Editorial Board

Psychosocial risks at work are factors that arise from the interaction between working conditions, organizations, and workers' characteristics. These risks can negatively impact employees' physical and mental health, affecting their well-being, productivity, and quality of life. Growing concern about these factors has been reflected in a significant increase in mental health-related sick leave, especially in sectors such as healthcare and education.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have observed the impact of psychosocial factors on the health of their workers. For example, Spain has experienced a 72% increase in sick leave for mental health reasons, reaching 643,681 in 2024. Most of these cases correspond to mild anxiety and depression disorders, with an average duration of 108 days. Women between 36 and 45 years of age account for 58% of cases.

Workplace stress is one of the most common psychosocial factors in the workplace. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), exposure to long working hours is the occupational risk factor with the highest attributable burden of disease, with an estimated 745,000 deaths from cardiovascular disease and stroke in 2016.

Regarding the main strategic lines for preventing the consequences of psychosocial risk at work, we can highlight the following:

1. Assessment and diagnosis of psychosocial risks

The early identification of psychosocial risks is essential for implementing effective preventive measures. In Article 16 of the Occupational Risk Prevention Law (LPRL), Spanish legislation establishes the obligation to assess all risks to the safety and health



of workers, including those of a psychosocial nature. This assessment must be continuous and systematic, using work environment surveys, interviews, direct observations, and statistical data analysis on sick leave.

2. Design a Healthy Work Environment

To achieve this, it is necessary to:

- Establish adequate working conditions: Ensure that workloads are reasonable, and available resources are sufficient to fulfil assigned tasks.
- Promote autonomy and control: Allow employees a certain degree of control over their work and related decisions, which can reduce stress and increase job satisfaction.
- Promote participation: Involve workers in decision-making and improving work processes, which can improve engagement and reduce psychosocial risks.

3. Training and Awareness

Training is a key tool for preventing psychosocial risks. Article 19 of the LPRL establishes workers' right to receive occupational risk prevention training. This training must include:

- Psychosocial risk identification: Training employees to recognize risk factors in their work environment.
- Coping techniques: Teaching strategies for managing stress and other work-related emotions.
- Communication skills: Promoting effective communication and conflict resolution in the workplace.

4. Promoting well-being and mental health

Implementing programs that promote workers' well-being and mental health is essential for preventing psychosocial risks. Some effective initiatives include:

- Psychological support programs: Offering counselling and emotional support services for needy employees.



- Wellness activities: Organizing workshops on relaxation, mindfulness, physical exercise, and other activities that promote general well-being.

5. Preventing workplace harassment and violence

Workplace harassment and violence are serious psychosocial risks that can have devastating consequences for employees' health. To prevent these behaviours, organizations should:

- Implement clear policies: Establish and communicate zero-tolerance policies toward harassment and violence.
- Train employees: Train workers in recognizing and handling workplace harassment and violence.

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