“And just be getting it out on the table, it just becomes more normal when it’s talked about.”
A qualitative analysis of workplace alcohol and drug interventions

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Introduction

* Majority of drinkers are in employment
* The workplace presents an ideal alcohol–related harm prevention setting
* Australia has yet to maximise this opportunity

Benefits of addressing workplace alcohol-related harm include:
* A safer workplace
* Increased performance & productivity
* Reduced absenteeism & presenteeism
* Decreased staff turnover
* Improved morale
* Improved employee health & wellbeing

Aim

The aim was to examine whether a comprehensive intervention, tailored to meet the needs and resources of individual workplaces, could reduce alcohol-related harm in the workplace.
Final report

Final report on vichealth.vic.gov.au website

Evaluation

• Implementation
• Process
• Outcome

Data collection
• Site observations
• Interviews
• Logbooks

Analysis
• Thematic analysis of qualitative data
Intervention

Step 1 – Develop policy package
Step 2 – Implement alcohol policy awareness
Step 3 – Supervisor & manager training
Step 4 – Referral pathway
Step 5 – Employee health, safety & wellbeing

Policy
Policy adaptations

* Alcohol and drug policy provided the foundation for the intervention
* Summary of policy
* Poster of policy
* Different languages to suit workplace
* Repeat information sessions
* Training for team leaders and supervisors

“...sometimes these policies can be a little bit word heavy and page heavy, and you guys definitely did the distilled version … the summary version, and we did it in all the different languages… We represented all the guys in that respect.”

Communication
Communication “normal talk”

- Improved communication between workers and management
- Alcohol and drugs
- Mental health
- Stress & fatigue
- Worker well-being

“I think it has helped a lot... just getting it out on the table, it just becomes more normal when it’s talked about.”

“Yeah, just to engage everyone. Not just management. Not just team leaders... Everyone’s just talking about it like it’s normal.”

“If they can come and talk to you about that that’s a good thing... they can be honest and it’s so much easier to deal with honesty... so that side of it has been positive very positive.”

Information
Information delivery style

* Delivery style of information
  * Use current process
  * Toolbox topics
  * Easy to understand
  * Easy to deliver
  * Quick and versatile

“I do it so it’s very light-hearted. That’s my personal approach... I know the staff all fairly well, I’m allowed to get away with a bit of humour... I put all the paperwork [handouts] up in the lunchroom... I advise anybody that after the sessions they can get the information and I check that every second day to make sure there’s still ample [handouts] up there.”

What next?
Knowing what to do next

* What do I do now?
* Knowing how to respond to issues
* Referral policy
  * Team leader, supervisor and manager training in referral policy
  * Local area resource guide and access to services

“I don’t know, it's sort of just there [pointing to the local area resource guide in their office] and if you need it... it’s a reference.”

“We encouraged the counselling and bits and pieces. And I think it was easier to deal with because it was out in the open; it wasn’t some sinister thing...”

Discussion

* Increased team leader and supervisor confidence
* Increased levels of workplace communication
* Increased levels of EAP access
* Increased levels of trust
* Genuine employer concern

“It’s not just about safety & productivity, they care about me & my family.”
Conclusion

There is little research being done in this area and to our knowledge this is the first study of its kind in Australia.

Key components

Interventions can work

Target high-risk groups such as male dominated workplaces

Implications for practice

* Production vs research
  * Production always comes first!

* Managing resistance
  * Focus on OHS
  * Focus on production
  * Focus on additional benefits of engagement
Implications for translation

* Universal application
* Must fit in with day-to-day production (or clinic etc.)
* Worker well-being approach
* Capacity building
* Community engagement

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