Understanding successful organisational health interventions: The role of leadership

Special issue call for papers from International Journal of Workplace Health management.

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Focus/aims

The aim of the special issue is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of leadership in health interventions and how it affects intervention outcomes.

For this special issue we invite contributions on the role of leadership for designing and implementing successful organizational health interventions.

Leadership is an essential element of health interventions conducted at workplace. It's particularly crucial for organisational interventions that often aim to address the causes of poor work environment and employee stress by changing how the work is designed, organized and managed.

The vast majority of organisational health intervention models and tools feature the leaders in a prominent position (Ipsen et al., 2015). Visible senior management commitment and the active role of line managers have been highlighted as essential components for employee health and well-being. In research and practice, leadership is a prominent feature of intervention evaluation models (Nielsen & Abildgaard, 2013) both in terms of understanding the role of managers in the process (Nielsen & Randall, 2012) and in terms of leadership as a contextual influence on intervention implementation (Biron & Karanika-Murray, 2014). In their systematic review of intervention studies, Westgaard and Winkel (2011) conclude that key factors revolve around the role of the managers, although there is no specific knowledge of what that means in practice. Management involvement and ownership of the interventions are highlighted as an essential part of participatory approaches to intervention design (Biron, Gatrell, & Cooper, 2010; Nielsen, 2013). At the strategic level, senior management signal approval of the initiatives and direction for the organisation (Mintzberg, 1979; O'Dea and Flin, 2003). At the local level, line managers can influence employee attitudes (Randall, Nielsen & Tvedt, 2009) and mobilise resources that determine how interventions are implemented (Dahl-Jørgensen and Saksvik, 2005). In addition, as well as being a lead or communicator of change, the manager is often the focus of an intervention (e.g., Hasson, Von Thiele Schwarz, Holmstrom, Karanika-Murray & Tafvelin, 2016). Finally, if organizational health interventions focus on changing (i) roles and social relationships, (ii) work conditions, and

(iii) the work environment, leadership (as a role or a function or a set of behaviours) can be a determinant of all three.

Therefore, although there is an implicit distinction in the literature about leadership as a role or position (e.g., line managers or senior management), leadership as a function (e.g., the function of engaging, communicating or setting a direction), and leadership as enacted behaviour (e.g., transformational leadership), there is no clear understanding of how these facets of leadership relate to intervention success, from design, to implementation, to evaluation. What is clear is that both line and senior managers are important, in different ways, for employee well-being e.g.(Karanika-Murray et al., 2015) and that leadership features in all stages and aspects of organisational health interventions. Despite the consensus on the importance of leadership for the success of organizational health interventions, many questions remain.

The ultimate aim of this special issue is to develop a deeper understanding of the role of leadership for successful organisational health interventions. We welcome conceptual and empirical papers that offer innovative perspectives on the role of leadership for organizational health interventions. We welcome submissions that offer either a theoretical, a methodological or a empirical contribution. Submissions that are novel or challenge established knowledge, take a single or multidisciplinary approach, and offer a potential for moving the field forward are especially encouraged.

Full papers will be due by January 2018.

Potential contributors are encouraged to submit a brief abstract indicating their intent to submit a full paper to the special issue. This will assist the guest editors with the planning of the special issue and can also be used to provide authors with initial feedback.

A number of questions can be identified, but these are not exclusive:

1. What is the role of line managers in the successful implementation of interventions? What type of leadership behaviours or styles are most appropriate?
2. How is senior managements' actions related to intervention implementation or the intervention outcomes?
3. How do line and senior managers' spheres of influence and roles (e.g., Minzberg, 1979) differ when it comes to intervention design and implementation? Are different leadership functions more important for different aspects of intervention implementation and success?
4. To what extend does leadership and management theory inform intervention theory and practice? How can a better integration of leadership theory into intervention theory and practice be achieved (e.g., what is the role of distributed leadership; can transactional leadership play an important role at specific stages of the intervention or change process)?
5. Through what processes and mechanisms does leadership impact interventions and change (e.g., Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2013)?
6. Can leadership development (Hasson et al., 2016; Karanika-Murray et al., 2017) improve intervention success or the sustainability of target outcomes?

7. How can managers influence be improved at the micro (e.g., resistance and commitment to change, reference; perceptual distance, Hasson et al., 2016) as well as the macro level of change (e.g., strategic change and the allocation of resources)?
8. How do managers integrate interventions into daily work? How do leaders balance leading or implementing an intervention while also managing the daily operations of the workplace involved in the intervention (e.g., balancing daily operations and organisational learning; Ipsen et al., 2015)?
9. What types of organizational resources are important for supporting leadership in relation to interventions success?

Submission procedure

Submissions to this journal are through the ScholarOne submission system here:

https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ijwhm

Please ensure you select this special issue from the relevant drop down menu.

For further information on author guidelines, please visit:
http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/pdf/guest_editors.pdf

Deadline for full paper submission: January 2018.

Expected date of publication: Autumn 2018

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