

The Impact of Diabetes on Worker Performance in the Public Sector: the Case of a Selected Area in Jaffna City

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Introduction

Today, many of the greatest threats to individual health and physical well-being stem from unhealthy lifestyles and high-risk behavior. This statement is true for cancer, diabetes, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and a host of modern health ailments often connected to a person's or group's social class, educational status and living conditions and their impact on such people's ability to access various opportunities.

Diabetes is a social health problem that the global society faces today. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or injury. This definition calls attention to the fact that being healthy involves much more than simply not being ill or injured. Being healthy also means being physically fit, having good social relationships with friends and family, being able to function or do things, and having a sense of well-being (Cockerhan, 2015). Health is defined as a capacity of personal experiences or a feeling of well-being. Many factors influence or contribute to such feeling: among them, social, religious, economic, personal, and medical factors.

However, today, people with diabetes face an increased risk of developing a number of serious health problems. It also has become a major and growing contributor to mortality and disability. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 347 million people worldwide have diabetes. In 2012 diabetes was the direct cause of 1.5 million deaths. The disease is predicted to become the 7th leading cause of death in the world by the year 2030. Diabetes Association of Sri Lanka (DASL) statistics reveals that there are nearly 4 million diabetics in Sri Lanka. Most studies suggest that being overweight and lack of exercise were the main causes of diabetes among children, while family history, food habits and obesity were the main causes among youth.

Most studies suggest that good health is a prerequisite for the adequate functioning of any individuals or society. If our health is sound, we can engage in numerous types of activities. But if we are ill, distressed, or injured, we face curtailment in our daily lives, and we may also become so preoccupied with our state of health that other pursuits gain secondary importance or are even rendered meaningless. It is in

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this context that this study investigates empirically the relationship between workers living with diabetes and their performance and satisfaction, by applying a medical-sociological framework. The present study seeks to highlight diabetes and understand the complex relationship between social factors and health in the public sector. It is expected to cast new light on a growing reality in the everyday activities of the public sector, and to help deepen the discourse on awareness among workers.

Objective of Research

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of diabetes on worker performance and the influence of environmental factors on public sector workers with diabetes. Under these components, this study especially focuses on two main research questions.

1. What is the complex relationship between environmental factors and workers living with diabetes?
2. How does diabetes impact a person's performance at work?

Research Methodology

Research Site

This study focuses on the work conditions of workers with diabetes in Jaffna district. Jaffna is the most important and metropolitan city in the Northern Province. This study focuses on Jaffna General Hospital in Jaffna city.

Methods of Data Collection

As Yin (2004:1) suggested, as this study was examining a real situation, the best methodology was the case study approach. Further, the study was an explanatory one looking at workers' activities and job satisfaction in Jaffna district. Being a case study, this study especially focuses on two major components such as workers with diabetes and their work performance. Under these components, this study examines the effects of environmental factors, and responses to health problems in a manner consistent with the culture, norms, and values of the workers. This study has reported on the experiences of 70 workers (62 diabetics and 8 non-diabetics) in the public sector. The participants were selected from a list of those who were registered with the General Hospital in Jaffna as having diabetes, using the purposeful sampling method. This study has been conducted using in-depth interviews and observations as ways of collecting primary data. For the analysis of this study, the grounded theory method was used with the ultimate goal of analysing

subjectivities as an outcome of diabetic workers' perceptions of their performance at work.

Data Analysis

In order to meet the objectives of the study, data was collected using qualitative methods and analysis. This study followed the grounded theory method for data analysis, which required the use of inductive methods and a constructive approach in constructing the meaning of data found during the field visit. After collecting the data, researcher conducted the initial coding of responses, then formulated focus coding, and finally constructed narrative of the response. This study summarises interviews by the researcher.

Finding of the Research

This study focused on the overall picture of workers with diabetes in the public sector, their health issues, satisfaction, and opinions and suggestions for future well-being. Care was taken to conduct the interviews in a manner sensitive to different aspects of worker perception, their feelings in the process of acquiring workers, and their subjective perspectives on various aspects of their life.

The information provided by participation was organised around themes that emerged from the data and discussed. This part presents a summary of the different themes based on workers' interviews during field visits, among them economic satisfaction, working environment, and gender inequality.

Economic satisfaction

Workers' economic positions are an important social scale to measure economic stratification. On the other hand, economic satisfaction acknowledges the fact that being healthy depends heavily on income. Also, it connects with the materialist explanation of how health inequality is related to wealth and income distribution in the light of housing, unemployment, and poor working conditions. Most workers face issues in relation to the monthly distribution of income among their families. As such, class-based health inequalities were identified. On the other hand, disparity in economic satisfaction is even more pronounced between the long term unemployed and private sector employees: people in work tend to live longer and better than those who are without work and without diseases like diabetes.

Working Environment

The strongest theme to emerge from the data was that of working environment. The data show that working condition is defined as the capacity of a population to

safeguard sustainable human well-being, and social and economic development. This theme focuses on how experiences of workers with diabetes affects them, and their day to day life. The stories of workers with diabetes illustrate how working environmental performs a function in constituting both lives and lifestyles.

Gender Inequality

This study has found disparities in health in men and women. Traditionally material circumstance appears to influence women's health. However, women with diabetes seek medical attention and have higher rates of self-reported disease than men. Women's lives are inherently different from men's in terms of family size, sexual reproduction, and status, with impacts on levels of domestic consumption, income and childbearing, and mothering activities.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to discuss the impact of diabetes on workers in the Government sector. Social factors are important influences on the manner in which societies organise resources to cope with health hazards and to deliver medical care to the population at large. This paper attempts to examine the relationship between environmental factors and workers living with diabetes, and their job satisfaction. This study discussed three themes based on the grounded theory method and coding system. In turn, these stories thus focus on how environmental factors and material conditions are constitutive of how workers with diabetes understand themselves and their places in social hierarchy.

This study found that healthy lifestyles and the avoidance of high- risk behavior advanced the individual potential for their productivity and job satisfaction in the Government sector, and also for a longer and healthier life. Also, workers with diabetes have a lower social and economic status.

The main limitations of this study are the period of time and size of the sample covered by the study. Data representing only the public sectors were used for the study. To avoid this limitation sample size can be increased, and the private sector included. However, this study can also contribute to the further development of sociology of health and industrial sociology.

Key words: Diabetes, Productivity, Job Satisfaction, Public Sector.

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