

Study of stress factors among counter clerks in municipal services

دراسة عوامل الضغط لدى موظفي شبابيك مصالح البلدية

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Abstract:

This article addresses the occupational stress experienced by municipal counter clerks. It aims to identify the level of stress to which these employees are exposed and to determine the factors that contribute to this stress. The study adopts Karasek's model to explore the relationship between stress exposure and the three dimensions of the model: psychological demand, autonomy, and social support. The results showed that all employees, consisting of 52, are exposed to high levels of stress in their work. Statistical analysis showed that the t-test was significant. The source of stress can be attributed to all dimensions measured by the Karasek

scale (psychological demands, degree of autonomy and decision-making, and social support at work).

With regard to the relationship between overall stress levels and the three dimensions of the scale, Pearson's correlation coefficient indicated statistically significant relationships for all dimensions.

However, this suggests that stress among municipal counter clerks is attributable to psychological demands, autonomy and decision-making, rather than social support at work, which confirms our initial hypothesis.

Keywords: service sector, municipal counter clerks, mental health, stress factors.

1. Introduction

In recent years, increasing attention has been devoted to mental health in the workplace, not only by those (occupational psychologists and other researchers and practitioners) concerned with health and labor issues but also by international and local official bodies, as well as employers who have come to recognise its importance and impact on the performance and effectiveness of both individuals and institutions. The emergence of risks affecting the psychological and mental health of employees across various professional sectors is mainly due to the rise of new work patterns that impose high demands on workers. Chief among these is the near-complete reliance on mental activity and communication, resulting from advancements in work tools and the widespread integration of modern technologies in all workplaces. The service sector is one of the fields that has undergone significant transformations, whether in terms of organisation, technology, or the evolving concept of social and economic service delivery to

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citizens/clients. This technological shift has led to a change in work and working hours, whereby the employee now heavily relies on modern technology and communication, which involves direct interaction with the citizen/client.

Working in municipal services is of considerable social and economic importance, as it is a vital link between citizens and the public administration. Employees in municipal services, particularly those working at service counters, constitute the frontline interface, delivering services to citizens on the one hand and representing the public administration on the other.

This direct relationship exposes employees in the service sector to psychosocial risks that significantly impact their mental health. Occupational stress is the most widespread of these effects and has attracted considerable attention in work psychology and ergonomics studies. It is now regarded as a public health issue, with research increasingly focused on understanding its sources and causes to enable effective workplace interventions.

2. Problem

Over the past twenty years, most studies have focused on psychosocial risks and quality of life in the workplace. These studies have shown that the absence of a clear prevention policy in the work environment can cause significant harm to institutions, as it directly compromises the health of workers and employees on the one hand and negatively affects the effective management of organisational structures on the other (Montreuil, 2020).

Significant developments in the workplace have led to major changes in both the content and work scheduling. The introduction of tools and modern technologies has modernised work processes, resulting in a near-total reliance on cognitive activity. In addition, changes have also affected the organisation of different aspects of work, such as the organisation of production for example, requiring the adoption of new management models.

All these developments have given rise to new risks that threaten individuals' mental and psychological health. Consequently, research has increasingly aimed to assess these risks to enable early intervention. These occupational risks affect both the physical safety and mental health of employees, exposing them to stress, moral harassment, and violence, among other challenges. As a result, the likelihood of developing certain occupational illnesses such as depression, psychosomatic disorders, and

sleep disturbances becomes a genuine concern (Agence Européenne pour la Sécurité et la Santé au travail, 2010).

From this perspective, mental health has become an essential focus in studies concerned with the human dimension of the workplace. Numerous disciplines have examined the relationship between health and work from various angles. In particular, work psychology and ergonomics have contributed to advancing research through diverse approaches aimed at identifying the factors responsible for exposure to risks, finding appropriate solutions, and developing preventive strategies to protect employees' health and sustain organisational performance and efficiency. One of the most significant consequences of exposure to psychosocial risks in the workplace is the emergence of high levels of stress among employees. This stress can affect their health and performance in various ways over the medium and long term.

The 1990s witnessed significant progress in addressing stress, and the concept gained widespread recognition in the media and scientific research. This growing interest was exemplified by the publication of a workplace stress prevention poster by the International Labour Office [ILO](International Labour Office, 1992).

Selye's model (1976) demonstrated that stress is an adaptive mechanism of the body that enables it to confront environmental dangers and threats by heightening alertness and attention. In this sense, it is a mechanism that facilitates handling environmental stressors. However, it was later revealed that this stress response also has a negative aspect; the exact adaptive mechanism may lead to significant disorders such as hypervigilance, anxiety, obsessive thoughts, and sleep disturbances, all of which affect individuals' health and performance (as cited by Falzon & Sauvagnac, 2004). These and other disorders highlighted for researchers the detrimental side of stress, prompting the development of various models aimed at studying and understanding stress, particularly in psychology. The interactionist model posits that stress responses are not uniform, regardless of the threat or individual differences; instead, they depend on the interaction between the individual and the environment. This model interprets stress as a lack of compatibility between environmental demands (e.g., workload, role ambiguity) and the individual's resources. Accordingly, the model places significant emphasis on the environment by identifying situations that exceed the adaptive capacities of a substantial number of individuals while also considering their characteristics.

Proponents of this approach aim to develop a collective perception of environmental risk levels by evaluating the available environmental resources (such as time and tools) rather than analysing the problem from a purely individual perspective and focusing solely on the individual's perception of the issue and the resources at their disposal (Vézina, 2002).

Numerous reports from research centres, most notably the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work [EU-OSHA], have highlighted the importance of studying employees' mental health by investigating stress-inducing factors using various qualitative and quantitative models. The objective is to precisely identify these factors and determine appropriate preventive strategies to address them. Among the most widely used models for studying workplace stress is Karasek's model, which assesses three dimensions of work situations that contribute to employees' experience of stress: task-related demands, autonomy and decision-making, and social support (Agence Européenne pour la Sécurité et la Santé au travail, 2010).

The service sector is considered one of the most critical fields that has drawn researchers' attention regarding employees' exposure to stress. A report by the Directorate General for Research, Studies and Statistics in France (Dares, 2010) revealed that social relations at work are among the primary causes of risk in public service professions (e.g., cashier roles). The report indicated that these jobs are predominantly affected by external violence risks, particularly in interactions with clients (such as angry or aggressive clients, rudeness or contempt, and even physical assault or threats). The same report noted that the absence of cooperation and support from management, notably when it lacks transparency, represents a significant problem in these roles. Moreover, such occupations are characterised by high emotional demands, requiring employees to maintain a pleasant demeanour and refrain from raising their voices at clients.

Work demands are key contributors to the emergence of stress-related risks, particularly those linked to time pressure. These roles require employees to act quickly to reduce waiting times and satisfy clients as swiftly as possible while avoiding errors.

The final factor highlighted in the report is the limited degree of autonomy. Many employees in these professions lack substantial freedom in decision-making due to strict administrative procedures and heavy reliance on digital systems, which significantly constrain their margin of discretion.

Employees in such roles often face a lack or insufficiency of information necessary to respond to clients or to explain specific procedures. Any personal initiative to appease or calm clients may expose them to administrative sanctions. Thus, a combination of high psychological demand and low decision-making autonomy exists.

A meta-analysis conducted by (Niedhammer et al., 2021) aimed to present all available quantitative estimates concerning the associations between psychosocial exposures at work and health effects, using a systematic review of the literature with meta-analysis. A systematic review of the literature published between 2000 and 2020 was conducted using the PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus and PsycINFO databases, in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. All reviews and studies in the literature exploring an association between psychosocial exposures at work and their effects on health were included. A total of 72 reviews and studies from the IPD-Work consortium were included.

Cardiovascular disease and mental disorders are generally significantly associated with psychosocial factors at work. The magnitude of these associations is greater for mental disorders than for cardiovascular disease. In addition, significant links were observed between work stress, long working hours and coronary heart disease, ischaemic stroke and depression.

In 2024, Institut national de recherche et de sécurité pour la prévention des accidents du travail et des maladies professionnelles (INRS) in France published a new report summarising epidemiological knowledge on the links between different psychosocial exposures and their effects on health. This summary is based on systematic reviews of literature published over the last twenty years in different countries and populations.

The results showed the predominance of the dimensions and combination of dimensions from the Karasek and Siegrist models.

Studies have shown that mental health is a key concern for many researchers who wish to demonstrate the link between psychosocial risks and mental health disorders, such as depressive disorders, depression, burnout, psychoactive substance use and sleep disorders.

Among these disorders is burnout, which is linked to intense psychological demands at work and excessive emotional demands.

On the other hand, studies focus more on workers in the private sector than those in the public sector, which has sparked interest in extending these studies to all areas.

Most studies are conducted in Europe, particularly in Scandinavian countries, across all areas of health studied (cardiovascular disease, components of metabolic syndrome, health risk behaviours, musculoskeletal disorders, mental health, occupational accidents and other health impairments) (Boini et al., 2024).

In recent years, municipal services in Algeria have undergone significant transformations in line with state policy aimed at modernising and reforming administrative management approaches. The goal has been to align local government services with social realities and the principles of public service delivery.

As a result of these transformations, work has undergone significant changes, such as increased complexity of tasks, reduced rest periods, the collective nature of work, higher citizen expectations and the use of digital and new technologies.

All these elements underscore the need to pay close attention to this category of employees by focusing on identifying their stress levels, understanding and determining the contributing factors, and exploring their relationship with the three dimensions of Karasek's model (psychological demand, autonomy and decision-making, and social support). Accordingly, the following research questions are asked:

- What is the level of occupational stress experienced by Counter Clerks in municipal services?
- Is there a relationship between stress factors and the overall level of stress according to the three dimensions of the model (psychological demands, autonomy and decision-making, and social support)?
- Which dimension is most closely related to stress among Counter Clerks in municipal services?

3. Hypotheses

- 3.1. Counter Clerks in municipal services are exposed to high stress while performing their duties.
- 3.2. Occupational stress is more strongly associated with psychological demands than with decision-making autonomy or social support.

4. Objectives of the study

Based on previous research in occupational stress, this study aims to examine the level of stress municipal employees witness in their workplace in the Algerian context. In particular, it explores the

degree link between occupational stress and psychological demands on the one hand and its link with decision-making autonomy or social support on the other.

5. Importance of the study

Municipal services have undergone significant transformations, in line with the State's policy to modernize and reform administrative management methods, paying particular attention to employees by focusing on identifying their stress levels allows us to adapt local government services to social realities and the principles of public service.

6. Determinants

6.1. Occupational Stress

The World Health Organization defines work-related stress as "a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. It is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. However, the way we respond to stress makes a big difference to our overall well-being" (World Health Organization , 2023).

According to the model proposed by Karasek and Theorell (1990), work situations characterised by a combination of high psychological demands and low decision-making autonomy increase the risk of developing physical and mental health issues. This model distinguishes between three specific dimensions of work situations: Psychological Demand, Autonomy and Decision-Making, and Social Support in the Workplace.

- Psychological Demand: This pertains to the intensity, speed, and volume of work, time pressures, interruptions, and conflicting demands.
- Autonomy and Decision-Making: This refers to the degree of autonomy that facilitates the ability to make decisions regarding work tasks. It is mainly related to the individual's capacity to be creative and to use and develop their skills.
- Social Support in the Workplace involves supervisors recognising an individual's work and colleagues appreciating it. It also involves interactions with peers and supervisors (Vézina, 2008).

6.2. Work Demands in the Service Sector

The service sector is characterised by several important features (Gérard & Leduc, 2014), the most prominent of which is the interaction between two or more parties, typically managed within a closed relationship between an employee and a citizen/client. This interaction comprises three elements: technical, contractual, and social. The social component dominates sectors with low qualifications or skill requirements, such as local services and personal assistance. These roles primarily require social and even emotional skills. In contrast, sectors that demand high levels of expertise, such as healthcare or consulting, involve all three components equally. Meanwhile, the relational element is somewhat reduced in standardised service sectors such as banking, insurance, or transport, where tasks are partially or fully uniform.

The service sector also features diverse working conditions due to the varied situations required to meet the needs of citizens or clients. Organising work in this sector presents difficulties, particularly in maintaining consistency because of frequent changes or deviations in working hours that arise from client interactions. A study by Caroly (2002) on the activity of postal counter staff in France highlighted the strong relationship between task demands and stress. It also demonstrated employees' difficulty adapting to the variability inherent in relationships with citizens (clients), often leading to conflict, aggression, and stress.

On the other hand, a significant mental workload characterises the reality of work in the service sector. This can be attributed, on the one hand, to the advancement of information and communication technologies used in task execution and, on the other, to citizen/client behaviours that generate new forms of difficulty (such as increased demands or "demand overload," and uncivil or inappropriate behaviours). This workload is further linked to the quantity, quality, and timing of the work expected from employees.

6.3. Stress-Inducing Factors in the Service Sector

This study adopts the classification proposed by Gollac and Bodier (2011) concerning the factors contributing to psychosocial risks. These factors are recognised as key contributors to psychosocial disturbances in the workplace, particularly stress.

Due to the multiplicity and evolution of psychosocial risk factors alongside changes in the world of work, Gollac and Bodier (2011) classified these factors into six major categories. This classification does

not differentiate between constraints and organisational factors but considers objective elements and individual perceptions of the work situation.

It is worth noting that Gollac and Bodier's report (2011) was based on a theoretical and empirical study of psychosocial risk issues and has become a reference framework for addressing these risks, particularly in the study of occupational stress. These categories are as follows:

. Work Intensity and Working Time

This dimension relates to Karasek's concept of psychological demand and Siegrist's notion of effort, as well as work rhythm constraints and vague or unrealistic objectives.

The multiplicity of these elements affects an individual's ability to manage them simultaneously. They are linked to the volume and complexity of tasks to be completed, time pressure, and the challenge of balancing professional and personal life.

These factors can burden specific work situations, particularly when achieving set objectives proves difficult given the available resources. For example, continuous client interaction under high pressure or during urgent situations can create burdens in the service sector. In healthcare, work situations often demand extended hours, weekend shifts, and night work.

. Emotional Demands

This dimension requires significant capacity for emotional regulation under all circumstances. This is especially evident in the service sector, where dealing with clients demands politeness and composure.

Due to their direct contact with citizens/clients, employees often fear situations involving aggression, which require individual coping mechanisms. These are often critical situations, especially when adequate resources are lacking, leading to occurrences of verbal and/or physical violence and hostility.

. Lack or Absence of Autonomy at Work

This dimension pertains to an individual's ability to be proactive and control their work. Autonomy allows workers freedom (*marges de manœuvre*) to reorganise their tasks independently. It also includes the possibility of participating in decisions directly related to their professional activities and how they use and develop their skills.

This dimension is closely linked to jobs characterised by task repetition, professions governed by strict regulations, and situations where individuals cannot acquire or develop new competencies. Such conditions are fundamental in creating a sense of diminished freedom in organising one's work or responding to new circumstances.

. Social Relations at Work

This dimension relates to the quality of relationships with colleagues and management and the recognition of one's work and abilities. In many cases, the presence of this dimension within an organisation reflects the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of its human resources management.

. Value Conflicts

This dimension concerns moral conflict in the workplace and how employees perceive the quality of their work, namely, whether they can carry out their duties to a satisfactory standard.

Conflict arises when various factors prevent employees from performing their tasks properly, such as insufficient resources, vague or contradictory goals, time pressure, or exposure to violence. These factors contribute to feelings of discomfort, isolation, and frustration.

. Job Insecurity

This dimension refers to the individual's sense of insecurity due to the lack of assurance regarding job continuity in light of potential changes or developments. This uncertainty generates anxiety concerning the employee's professional future.

7. Materials and Methods

7.1. Design

A descriptive approach is used to identify factors contributing to stress among municipal employees and gathered corresponding indicators.

7.2. Participants

The study sample consists of 52 employees selected randomly, 22 participants from the Bab Ezzouar municipality and 30 from the Bouzareah municipality. The sample characteristics (Charcts) are as follows:

Table 1 Demographics for the Sample

Charcts		n	(%)
Gender	Male	29	56
	Female	23	44
Age Group	20–30 years	15	29
	31–40 years	15	29
	Over 40 years	22	42
Marital Status	Single	20	38
	Married	28	54
	Divorced	2	4
	Widowed	2	4
Work Experience	Less than 5 years	13	25
	5 to 10 years	13	25
	More than 10 years	26	50

7.3. Instruments

Karasek's model, initially developed in 1979, was utilised as a questionnaire to assess and interpret work-related stress. This questionnaire is considered the oldest and most widely used in psychological studies. and it has undergone two stages of development. It first appeared as a two-dimensional model (psychological demand, decision-making demand) and then evolved into a three-dimensional model (with the addition of the social support dimension), which is considered essential in reducing or addressing many stress factors at work.

The model has been validated and tested in several large epidemiological studies (Kristensen, 1995) and the JCQ is available in 22 languages (as cited by Karasek et al, 1998). Karasek's questionnaire was used (in its 26-item version) in the French SUMER 2002/2003 survey, and its psychometric qualities were validated, including for its French version (Niedhammer et al., 2006).

In the current study, we verified the validity of the test using Cronbach's alpha and obtained a value of 0.78. We also used the split-half method to calculate test reliability and obtained a value of 0.84, indicating that the scale is stable.

This questionnaire comprises (26) items. Responses to these items are given on a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4), with scoring ranging from one to four.

The items are distributed across three dimensions:

- **Psychological Demand:** Includes nine items (items 10 to 18) assessing psychological workload through the quantity and quality of work, such as speed and intensity, workload, task quantity and complexity, fragmentation, and predictability of work.
- **Autonomy and Decision-Making:** Comprises nine items (items 1 to 9) measuring the breadth or limitation of decision-making autonomy and the ability to modify work methods and goals (e.g., how the work is performed, use of skills, and development of competencies).
- **Social Support:** Consists of 8 items (items 19 to 26) evaluating the extent to which an individual can rely on colleagues and supervisors to cope with psychological workload (e.g., support and assistance from supervisors and colleagues, recognition and appreciation from peers).

5.4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation. The one-sample t-test and Pearson correlation coefficient were also employed. The statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS software package.

8. Results and Discussion

8.1. Results

Table 2 **One-Sample T-Test Results for Stress Level among Municipal Counter Clerks**

Sample Size	Mean Score	Hypothetical Mean	Standard Deviation	One-Sample T-Test	Significance Level
52	68.46	65	6.69	03.73	0.01

The statistical analysis revealed that the sample's mean score on the stress scale (68.46), with a standard deviation (6.69). A one-sample t-test was performed to determine whether there was a significant difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean value (65) . The calculated t-value (3.73) ,

statistically significant at the ($p=0.01$). This indicates that most employees' scores on the Karasik scale exceeded the default average, confirming that municipal reception staff do indeed suffer from above-average levels of occupational stress. Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3 Correlation Between Overall Stress Level and the Three Dimensions

Dimension	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level
Psychological Demand	23.09	3.95	0.68	0.01
Decision-Making	24.84	4.06	0.66	0.01
Social Support	20.51	4.18	0.29	0.05

Statistical analysis showed a significant positive correlation between overall stress and psychological demands ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that stress is linked to job requirements emphasizing speed and accuracy in service delivery, coupled with strong communication skills for effective citizen interaction. Decision-making also showed a significant positive correlation with overall stress ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that stress is associated with job-related independence. These professions are known for their low degree of independence, especially in new or unfamiliar situations, because employees are required to apply the rules that govern the profession. In many cases, applying the rules as they are creates situations of anger and misunderstanding among citizens, which makes employees vulnerable to verbal abuse and dissatisfaction.

The weakest correlation was found in the social support dimension ($r = 0.29$, $p < 0.05$), although statistically significant, it was lower than the other two dimensions.

8.2. Discussion

8.2.1. Stress Level Among Municipal Counter Clerks

Following the presentation and analysis of the results concerning the level of occupational stress experienced by municipal employees responsible for reception, the conclusions based on Karasek's scale and its three dimensions (psychological demands, autonomy and decision-making, and social support in the workplace) indicate that the stress levels of the employees in the sample studied exceed the hypothetical average.

This high level of stress is attributable to the high demands imposed by the tasks performed by municipal employees. As indicated in the theoretical framework, working in the service sector inherently involves engaging in the very core of the profession: direct interaction with others. This requires mobilising dynamic cognitive processes intrinsically linked to interactions with citizens requesting services, as opposed to administrative interactions managed by employees.

Although the services provided at municipal counters are governed by clear regulations, with specific tasks and responsibilities assigned to each employee, the need to interact with various segments of society transforms the nature of these services into socially and emotionally mediated exchanges, shaped by direct contact with the public.

While the service offered to citizens at municipal counters may seem simple, consisting mainly of an exchange of information between the employee and the citizen, Caroly (2002) argues that this interaction is a complex relationship composed of four elements: the customer/citizen, the employee, the organisation and the work group.

The results showed that the level of stress experienced by municipal counter employees is due to factors related to psychological demands, autonomy and decision-making, as well as social support. This means that the stress experienced by municipal service counter employees includes most of the factors identified in Gollac's (2011) typology, which are related to work intensity and hours, emotional demands associated with anger management, and attempts to answer all questions, even if they do not have sufficient information to do so.

Autonomy at work is one of the most important factors associated with mental fatigue and, consequently, stress. It refers to a worker's ability to manage their own work but, above all, to manage their working time. However, this dimension is often hampered by overlapping roles in terms of organisation and processes. Added to this is the existence of a set of rules that must be followed and that govern the performance of tasks.

Furthermore, there is a lack of social support at work, both from superiors and colleagues, particularly when working relationships are characterised by conflict, dissatisfaction and sometimes differences in values.

8.2.2. Correlation Between Overall Stress Level and Psychological Demand, Decision-Making, and Social Support

Occupational stress in municipal employees is strongly linked to the psychological demands dimension of the Karasek scale. Psychological demands involve constraints on task performance, such as quantity, complexity, and time pressure. Service work necessitates strong communication and social interaction, requiring a high level of emotional commitment to citizen satisfaction.

The introduction of modern technologies in municipal services has transformed work content and operating methods, increasing mental workload and posing a psychosocial risk, as evidenced by previous research.

The current study also reveals a significant relationship between stress and a lack of autonomy in decision-making. Decision-making latitude encompasses control over task organization, participation in decisions, and autonomy in skill utilization and development, all of which can be limited in highly regulated jobs. While the literature emphasizes social support, its relationship with stress was weak in our study.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing stress in local public services, such as municipalities, postal services, and tax offices, and warrant further investigation into the broader consequences of occupational stress in this sector.

We recommend that organizations implement early-stage psychosocial risk prevention plans, grounded in thorough analyses of actual work situations, to better understand and mitigate the impact of stress factors on employee psychological health and public service performance.

9. Conclusion

Stress represents an ongoing challenge and a critical concern for all modern societies, necessitating early intervention to identify and understand its underlying causes based on each specific work situation and field. This requires developing effective preventive strategies to protect employees within institutions. In this paper, we sought to shed light on occupational stress as a manifestation of psychosocial risks in the workplace. Stress has become a significant concern for organisations and societies worldwide. Many researchers argue that this disorder was long overlooked in terms of its impact on individuals'

psychological and mental health, as well as its effects on organisational efficiency by both employers and society at large.

In contrast, stress has now gained significant media attention, particularly following reports of suicide in the workplace. Today, workplace conflicts, dissatisfaction, and discomfort are increasingly associated with stress and burnout. According to some researchers, this situation has led to a trivialisation of the issue and a reluctance among employers and professionals to commit to effective prevention strategies (Montreuil, 2020). Nevertheless, reviewing the various models concerning workplace health and prevention reveals that despite their diversity, they remain limited in providing sustained and adequate protection against the wide range of risks employees and workers face.

Studies have shown that individuals' exposure to workplace risks stems from multiple causes, including personal characteristics, the technical system, and the organisational structure in place. Based on this causal relationship, researchers, particularly in the field of ergonomics (Garrigou et al., 2004), believe that focusing preventive efforts on a single cause while neglecting others may reduce the chances of effective intervention and change, thereby limiting the success of prevention strategies. For this reason, analysing actual work activity is considered a central step in studying psychosocial risks. It is essential for effective prevention and for fostering workplace health, as it allows such risks to be examined within a defined system and a specific context.

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