

6th International Forum

Mineral Resources in Greece: A Driving Force for Economic Development

“Occupational Stress and its consequences on Job
Performance and Accidents”

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Definition of Occupational Stress

“Occupational stress is a state which is accompanied by physical, psychological or social complaints or dysfunctions & which results from individuals feeling unable to bridge a gap with requirements or expectation placed on them and affects an individual’s productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work”

The individual is well adapted to cope with short-term exposure to pressure, which in some cases can be considered as positive and may increase performance but has greater difficulty in coping with prolonged exposure to intensive press, in the long run

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ORIGINS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE ORGANIZATION

- ❖ **Excessive workload (types of hours worked (Quantitative workload or overload: Having more work to do than can be accomplished comfortably, Qualitative workload: Having work that is too difficult, Underload: Having work that fails to use a worker's skills and abilities)**
- ❖ **Isolation**
- ❖ **Role conflict & role ambiguity**
- ❖ **Lack of autonomy, career development barriers**
- ❖ **Difficult working relationships (top down or bottom up)**
- ❖ **Bullying**
- ❖ **Harassment,**
- ❖ **Negative psycho-social work environment**
- ❖ **Job insecurity**
- ❖ **Low level of involvement in decision – making in contrast with high volume of work**

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS (1)

physical
stressors

- Chemical agents
- Physical agents (noise, heat, dust etc.)
- Hazards which cause fear
- Uncomfortable work area

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS (2)

social
stressors-
psychosocial
environment

- High job demands
- low job control
- low social support
- lack of input into decisions
- Conflicting demands
- repetitive tasks or machine paced work
- shift work, especially rotating shifts

- poor supervision
- poor relations with co-workers
- Lack of promotions
- Job insecurity
- Excessive overtime

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OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS (3)

Managerial
costs of Job
stress

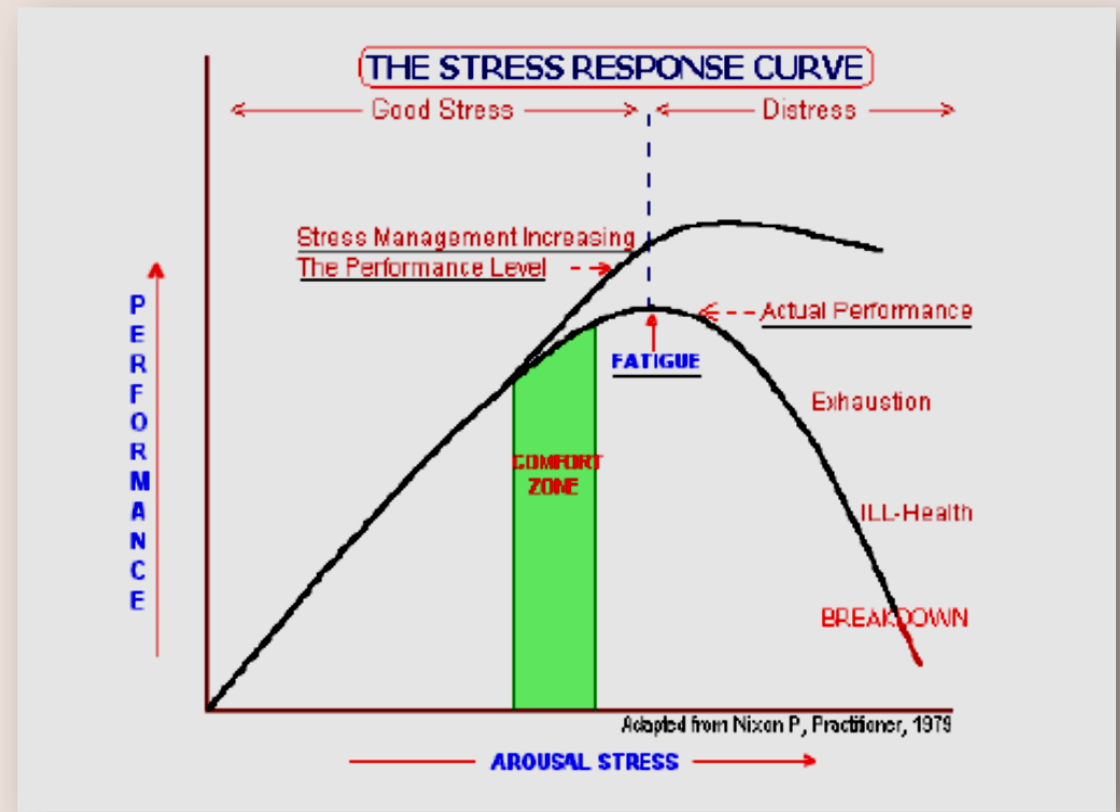
- Absenteeism
- Diminished productivity
- Low and of bad quality job performance
- Low moral
- compensation claims
- health insurance
- direct medical expenses
- coping with job demand
- role in the organization
- career development
- Interpersonal relationships
- Organizational Climate

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CONSEQUENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS (A)

AT INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- Health problems
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Aggressiveness
- Mindlessness
- Burn-out
- Anti-social behavior
- Bad quality of social/family life or personal relationships
- Mood shifts



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CONSEQUENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS (B)

AT ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

- Job performance
- Accidents rate/injuries
- Work-life balance
- Interpersonal relationships
- Negative image of the company, as an employer
- Premature retirement
- Loss of valuable work force



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CONSEQUENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS (C)

At company level, from financial and economic standpoint ,untreated occupational stress may result in:

- Increased absenteeism and turnover
- Cost of damaged equipment
- Decreased levels of productivity as well as lost workdays due to disability (health insurance claims etc)
- Far less is known about the cost in lost productivity by employees who continue to work while suffering from stress related conditions
- Short/long-term disability costs

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CONSEQUENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Statistics about the cost of occupational stress, at European Level, according to ESENER study (a)

- **72%** of workers reported as one of the most common causes of workplace stress, professional insecurity and the feeling of uncertainty resulting from adverse movements in organizational or departmental restructuring
- **66%** attributed stress to over workload
- **59%** attributed stress to the fact that the employee is subject to unacceptable behaviors such as bullying or harassment
- **51%** of employees acknowledges stress as "everyday longer statute" of his work
- **40%** of employers consider tackling psychosocial risks more difficult than the classic immediate hazards, unsafe conditions or dangerous reactions that occur in the work
- **50%** of senior executives believe that none or very few will experience a mental illness or problems during working life or in cases where they appear to be due to external factors

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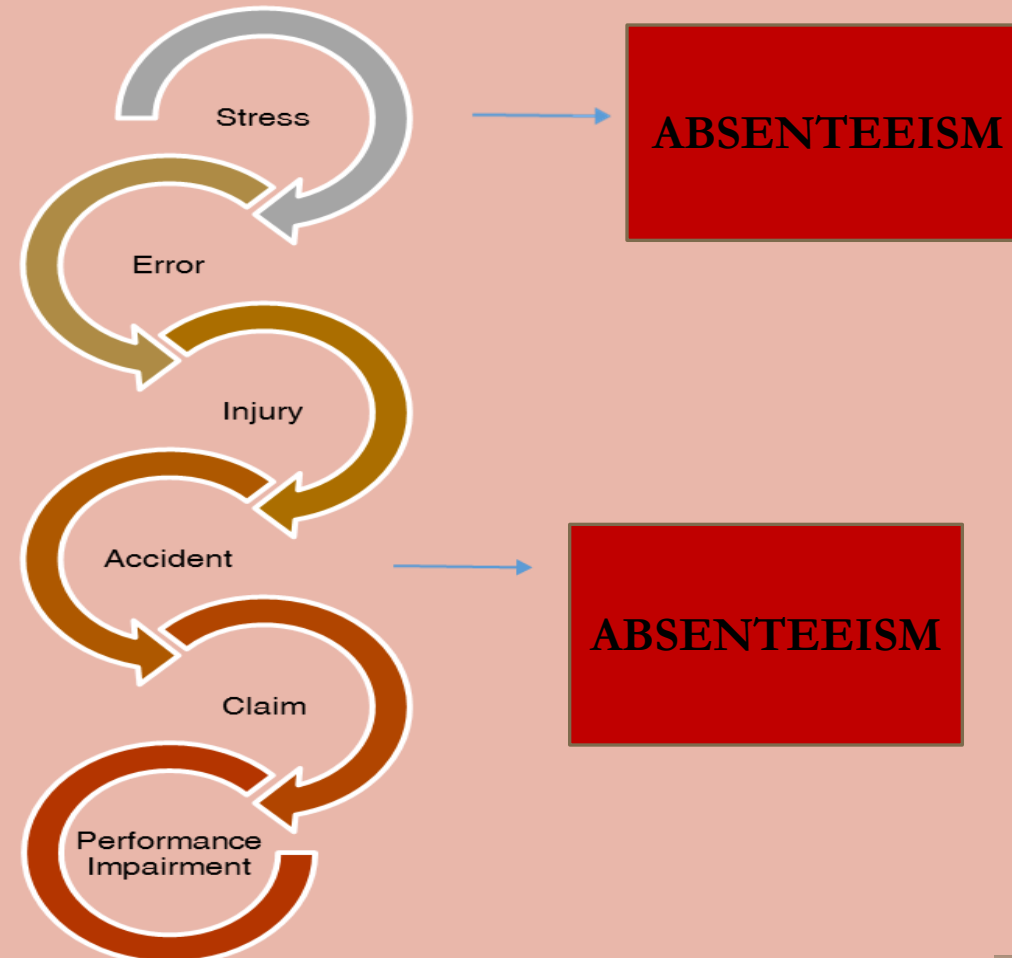
CONSEQUENCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Statistics about the cost of occupational stress, at European Level, according to ESENER study (b)

- 50-60% of all lost working days can be attributed to work-related stress and psychosocial risks associated with work
- 53% of employers are not adequately informed on how to include psychosocial risks in risk assessments carried out, confirming the notion that addressing these risk factors is considered more difficult than with conventional risks H & S
- Around 33% of companies employing more than 20 workers in EU-28 implement action plan for the prevention of work-related stress.
- With respect to receiving the appropriate measures in the EU-28, the most commonly cited measures is the reorganization of work in order to mitigate the excessive load and stress at work (38%) and providing confidential mentoring services workers (36%)
- Some countries, particularly those that joined the European Union in 2004 and some of the candidate countries, stated that the most important motivation for addressing health and safety at work is to maintain the good reputation
- It is important that the management of psychosocial risks such as stress, be part of the general management of occupational safety and work, rather than implemented as a separate activity

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MODEL OF THE COST OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE LONG TERM



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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (PART 1)

Structural or organizational change

- ✚ Modifying shifts
- ✚ Reducing physical hazards
- ✚ Improving career ladders
- ✚ Modifying the use of training and technology
- ✚ Job rotation and enrichment
- ✚ Increasing skill levels
- ✚ Worker involvement in decision making

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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (PART 2)

- Organize a stress management program that focuses on different employee at hierarchical level
- Take adequate steps to redesign jobs, which are taxing to employees abilities and capacities
- Adequate role clarification to be made whenever necessary to eliminate role ambiguity
- Undertake stress audit at all levels in the organization to identify stress area, improving conditions on job and alleviating job stress
- Have pre-employment screening
- Monitoring of psycho-social factors in the workplace(psycho-social environment)

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ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (PART 3)

- Supervision of vulnerable groups
- Advice, feedback, training at all levels of employment
- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
- Improve communications-reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers.
- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job.

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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL (PART 4)

- Combat workplace discrimination (based on race, gender, national origin, religion or language).
- Bring in an objective outsider such as a consultant to suggest a fresh approach to persistent problems
- Introduce a participative leadership style to involve as many subordinates as possible to resolve stress-producing problems
- Encourage work-life balance through family-friendly benefits and policies
- Maintain job demands at healthy levels
- Develop strategies to improve personal coping mechanisms (exercise, nutrition tc)
- Training in substance abuse awareness
- Organize discussion groups on healthy stress reducers

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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

Measures for minimization of Occupational Stress in cases of crisis (before, during and after crisis incidents or periods) (part 1)

- ❖ Establishment of clear lines of authority and responsibility in order to minimize stress by elimination of confusion about who reports to whom
- ❖ Regular Training on stress management techniques
- ❖ Create a facility evacuation plan and practice drills regularly
- ❖ Provide ongoing training to ensure that staff are familiar with safety procedures and policies
- ❖ Develop guidelines to help workers prepare for deployment

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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

Measures for minimization of Occupational Stress in cases of crisis (before, during and after crisis incidents or periods) (part 2)

- ❖ Have a pre-established plan for how employees will check on their families if disaster strikes during work hours
- ❖ Clear definition of individual roles and reevaluation if situation changes
- ❖ Partner inexperienced workers with experienced veterans. This system provides support, monitors stress and reinforces safety procedures
- ❖ Rotation of workers from high stress to lower stress functions
- ❖ Initiation, encouragement and monitoring of work breaks

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Measures for minimization of Occupational Stress in cases of crisis (before, during and after crisis incidents or periods) (part 3)

- ❖ Implement flexible schedules for workers who are directly impacted by an event, in order to have a better rehabilitation to work environment
- ❖ Provide communication for workers in dangerous environments, ensuring that staff know who to call when problems arise
- ❖ Allow time for workers who have experienced personal trauma or loss. Transition these individuals by assigning them in less demanding jobs
- ❖ Provide stress management workshops and educational in services
- ❖ Offer group self-care activities and acknowledgements
- ❖ Set the tone by realting to workers with respect and valuing their contributions

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Measures for minimization of Occupational Stress in cases of crisis (before, during and after crisis incidents or periods) (part 4)

- ❖ Clearly communicate the rationale behind procedural or supervisory changes and performance expectations
- ❖ Create a formal employee suggestion system that encourages staff to contribute and be involved in decision making
- ❖ Resolve conflicts early and quickly
- ❖ Prepare workers for concrete tasks they may perform through technical training
- ❖ Acknowledge staff that work is often stressful and connect staff to professional help if necessary
- ❖ Promote an atmosphere where attention to one's emotional state is acceptable and encouraged rather than stigmatized or disregarded

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General proposals for tackling occupational stress at individual and organizational level (between co-workers and top down-bottom up relationships)

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- ✚ Management of workload
- ✚ Balanced lifestyle
- ✚ Stress reduction strategies
- ✚ Self awareness
- ✚ Enhancement of resilience
- ✚ Development of optimistic/realistic goals
- ✚ Contact with reliable people
- ✚ Arrangement of prompt treatment and necessary counseling



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Overall, in a proactive stress management plan that prioritizes environmental and organizational health, a supervisor or manager should:

- ❖ Promote positive psychological capital in the workplace environment
- ❖ Define clear purpose, goals and training
- ❖ Functionally defined roles
- ❖ Administrative controls
- ❖ Team support
- ❖ Plan for stress management



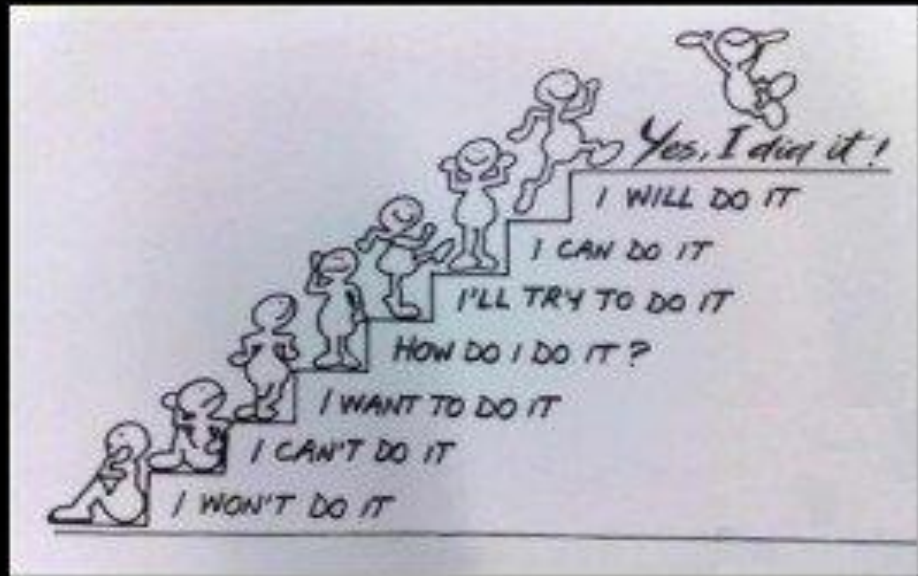
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Managers can boost employees' perception of strong management and authentic leadership through:

- Relentless and detailed feedback
- Open communication
- High visibility through a supportive leadership style which engages with others in such a way as to raise one another to high levels of motivation
- Creating a culture where failure over failure are looked upon as steps towards success
- Demonstrating personal courage & galvanize a team or organization or individual, that lacks resolve

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



Which Step Have You Reached
Today?

**“IN TIMES OF GREAT STRESS OR ADVERSITY,
IT’S ALWAYS BEST TO KEEP BUSY, TO PLOW
YOUR ANGER AND YOUR ENERGY INTO
SOMETHING POSITIVE.”**

LEE IACOCCA

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