

The Prevalence of Metabolic Syndrome in an Employed Population and the Impact on Health and Productivity.

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OBJECTIVE: To investigate the prevalence of metabolic syndrome in an employed population and its association with health risks, health perception, illness days, work limitation (presenteeism), and short-term disability (STD). **METHODS:** Five thousand five hundred twelve employees of a financial services company responded to an on-site health risk appraisal which included measured waist circumference and biometric results. The metabolic syndrome criteria were based on the 2005 AHA/NHLBI scientific statement on the diagnosis and management of metabolic syndrome. Perceived health, illness days, and presenteeism were self-reported; STD days were obtained from claims data. **RESULTS:** In this employee population (61% women, average age 41 years), 22.6% met the criteria for metabolic syndrome and were more likely to report more health risks, poorer health perception, and more absent days due to illness. There was no clear association with presenteeism or STD incidence. However, as the number of metabolic risk factors increased, there was an increase in STD incidence, decrease in health perception, and increase in illness days. No association was found with number of metabolic risk factors and presenteeism. **CONCLUSIONS:** Metabolic syndrome was associated with poor perceived health, increased illness days, and an increased trend of STD incidence. Worksite health promotion programs could be useful in helping employees and employers to identify metabolic syndrome risks and take steps to reduce risk and potential productivity losses.