

The Association of Health Risks with the Cost of Time Away from Work.

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The purpose of this study was to combine absences, short-term disability, and workers' compensation into a sum of the cost of time away from work (TAW) and compare it with health risk status and individual health risks of 6220 hourly workers at Steelcase Inc. The study used 3 years (1998 to 2000) of TAW and health risk appraisal data. Higher TAW costs were associated with illness days, drug/medication use, the individual's lower perception of physical health, job dissatisfaction, high stress, life dissatisfaction, and physical inactivity. More high-risk individuals (80.6%) had a TAW occurrence than medium- (72.8%) and low-risk (61.1%) individuals. High-risk individuals had higher TAW costs than medium- and low-risk individuals. Of the total TAW costs, 36.2% was attributed to the excess risks of the medium- and high-risk individuals or non-participants compared with low-risk participants. If TAW costs follow risk reduction, a potential annual savings of \$1.7 million could be achieved.