

EAP Effectiveness research summary

Comcare 2020

Overall Studies

- There are hundreds of published peer-reviewed articles showing the efficacy of EAP programs. These have been undertaken globally in many countries over many decades.
- To quote Mark Attridge, a leading researcher in the field from his keynote presentation at the EAPA world conference in Pheonix, Arizona in 2013:
“There are now over 1,500 papers of applied research on workplace mental health and 500 just on EAP concluding that workplace intervention is generally effective.”

Latest Australian Research (Bouzikis & Dollard, 2019)

- Study of EAP effectiveness and Psychosocial Workplace Climate
- The first hypothesis predicted that employee psychological health and wellbeing would decrease after undergoing an EAP. Consistent with previous findings, the repeated measures pre- and post-test data revealed a significant reduction in the psychological distress of workers following an EAP intervention, as reflected in participants GHQ-12 scores. This finding is also consistent with previous studies highlighting significant benefits after three EAP sessions (Attridge, et al., 2013; Mcleod & McLeod, 2001).
- EAP was not found to be moderated or dependent upon any changes in the organisation's corporate climate, as measured by the PSC-12.

Health and Wellbeing

- Effective workplace health programs (EAPs) could prevent up to two-thirds of production loss (e.g., sickness absence as a result of poor psychological health and wellbeing) (WHO, 2000).
- Prioritising employee health and wellbeing contributes to positive business growth, employee engagement/satisfaction, and assists in reduction of decreased productivity and absence costs within organization (Nunes, et al., 2018).

Employee Assistance Programs

- Significant benefits have been found after 3 sessions (average number offered by providers is 3-4 in Australia) (Kirk & Brown, 2003).
- Current providers view initiative as cost-effective strategy to manage risk (Joseph & walker, 2017).
- Success of interventions has been previously linked to an organization's overall processes, practices, and health (Leiter, et al. 2011).
- Consistent findings from previous survey-based satisfaction studies where clients overall satisfied with services, provider, treatment, with reported emotional health increase (Philips, 2005; Compton & McManum, 2015).

Client Satisfaction

- 80% of clients reported *satisfied* or *highly satisfied* with service, would use again, and recommend to colleagues (McLeod, 2010).
- University EAP study reported positive perceived improvement in personal and work lives, increased focus at work, increased workplace relationships. Clients satisfied with treatment therefore also reported increase in perceived quality of life (Philips, 2005).

EAP Effectiveness

- Most existing research has used cost-benefit analyses to highlight benefits of EAPs and effects on organization finances, absenteeism costs, employee turnover, and work compensation claims (Eischen, Grossmeier & Gold, 2005; Attridge, 2010).
- Previous studies include naturalistic, practice-based, controlled trial research designs, and some case studies performed in single work setting.
- Csiernik, Chaulk, McQuaid, 2012: mixed methods, program data reviews, online surveys, qualitative interviews.
 - Found EAP to be purposeful and generated high client satisfaction

Qualitative Studies

- Millar, 2002: Self-reported improvements in overall wellbeing, physical and psychological health, social functioning, and work performance post –EAP.
- Elliot and Williams, 2002: Similar findings to above.



Systematic/Literature Reviews

- McLeod and McLeod, 2005; BOHRF, 2005; Csiernik, 2005: Positive evidence for Employee Assistance Programs
- Gardner, et al., 2005; McLeod, 2010: Positive effect of EAPs on psychological symptoms, stress, depression, anxiety, burnout, and drug and alcohol problems.
- Follmer and Jones, 2018: Employee improvement in emotional wellbeing symptoms after five month EAP in comparison to control group (no EAP).
- McLeod and McLeod, 2001: 16 studies supporting effectiveness of workplace counselling with problems varying relative to diverse organizational settings.

EAP Effectiveness-

Increase productivity, reduce absenteeism, increase physical and emotional health, and improve relationships.

- UK study: found EAPs to be effective showing recovery post-intervention in 70% of an 80% that completed course of sessions (Kinder, 2013).

Pre and Post test study designs

- Dickerson, Murphy, & Clavelle, 2012: clients showed improvement and significant short-term benefits after EAP treatment on emotional wellbeing.
- Harris, et al., 2002: significant positive change in clients from EAP commencement to three month follow-up. E.g. reported less impact of emotional distress on work behaviours and social activities.
- Milot, M. 2019: (Canada) significant reduction in psychological distress, depressive/anxiety symptoms, reduced work distress, increased work engagement, greater life satisfaction.