



**Abstract Title:** A comprehensive workplace health intervention assessment: A mixed methods study

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## Introduction

Declining population health adversely affects organizational outcomes. Workplace wellness programs (WWPs), intended to improve employee health, are not supported by conclusive economic evidence due to serious methodological limitations and the sparse number of intervention studies. Moreover, the WWP literature recommends the presence of several best practices within organizations as a prerequisite to achieving successful WWP outcomes.

## Objectives

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness a comprehensive multiple health behaviour change intervention, in a workplace setting mostly absent WWP best practices, over a 16-week period.

## Methods

A mixed methods quasi-experiment design was used to assess the intervention efficacy among financial consultants (n=81) employed in a leading Canadian financial services firm. A doubly multivariate repeated measures ANOVA of composite scales for the self-report measures compared treatment and control groups before, immediately following and three months after the intervention (six months for new sales revenue) was used to determine the training effect. Apriori calculations suggested the design had a power of .90 to detect a large effect at  $p = .05$ . Interpretive description and content analysis provided enhanced interpretation for quantitative findings using observations, two semi-structured interviews (n=8), and weekly journals (n=10).

## Results

Overall, the results from the study showed statistically significant improvements for treatment (n=44) compared to control (n=37) participants on self-report measures including thriving ( $p < .05$ ), resilience ( $p < .005$ ), physical health ( $p = .05$ ), presenteeism – productivity loss ( $p < .05$ ); life purpose behaviours ( $p < .05$ ); physical activity ( $p < .01$ ); and nutrition ( $p < .001$ ). However, findings for engagement improvements were non-significant likely due to participants being already engaged before the treatment and thus experiencing a ceiling effect. Sales revenue productivity was non-significant for treatment compared to control participants. However, treatment group sales revenue did not decline, qualitative findings indicated many participants spent less time at work, and

six-months may not have been an adequate time period to show effect. Qualitative findings provided insights on behaviour change techniques used in the intervention.

## Conclusion

A comprehensive WWP intervention, targeting multiple health behaviours, improved thriving, resilience, physical health, presenteeism, life purpose behaviour, physical activity and nutrition outcomes for financial consultants over the study period, in an organization mostly absent WWP best practices. Engagement and new sales revenue did not increase nor decline. While further study is needed, these outcomes may have positive practice implications for leaders considering implementation of a WWP, absent best practices, within their organization.

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