WE NEED TO:

Transition from healthy workplaces to healthy workers and incorporate lifestyle interventions in workers’ health programmes.

Occupational health approach to workers’ health

In this model, the work environment, the nature of the work and the inherent qualities of the worker interact in a complex way to determine health status and vulnerability to work-related risks. The focus is also on targeted interventions to improve workforce health and to reduce work-related risks. 

Chronic disease is the primary driver of health-care costs. 

When employers finance health care, reducing NCD risks can result in considerable cost savings for businesses. Health programmes targeting NCD risk factor reduction for workers resulted in a 25%-30% reduction in employers’ health-care costs. 

US$ 37,000 per year in dialysis costs. 

Advanced kidney disease, saves the Government around US$ 1 US$ 4–6 million per year. This is more than twice the annual per capita government expenditure on health.

The approach transitions holistic health care from a focus on the workplace to a focus on the workers.

Every country’s healthy future demands healthy workers.

To safeguard development gains, we need to take an integrated approach to health centred on working people. In line with the Western Pacific Region’s Initiative of putting people at the center of care, this approach transitions holistic health care from a focus on the workplace to a focus on the workers.

“Worker health” provides an alternative model for comprehensive health care that upholds and values a country’s most vital resource: its workforce.

Workers’ health model

An innovative approach to integrated health focused on working people, putting people at the center of care. The approach brings together health-care providers, employers, and employees to work together to focus on the workers.

Healthy Workers, Healthy Future

Why investing in healthy workers is fundamental to national development


Why focus on workers?

60% of the world’s population are workers (2015).

The impact of healthy workers is extensive

Healthy economies require healthy workers. Healthy workers help build and maintain economies. Healthy workers are more productive, with lower absenteeism and turnover. Healthy workers are happier and more engaged in their work. Healthy workers contribute to healthy families and communities.

Healthy workers are essential to healthy families and communities. Healthy workers are more likely to have healthy and happy families. Healthy and happy families sustain their communities.

What is the state of workers’ health programmes in the Western Pacific Region?

WHO commissioned a regional mapping study of workers’ health programmes. The study consisted of a desk review and survey of the administration of a survey on national focal points for occupational health of Western Pacific Region Member States.

(Medich-Ochir, 2015)

Worker’s health programmes in the Western Pacific

Major Findings

Workers determine families’ access to health and healthcare services. When workers are healthy, their families are more likely to be healthy. And healthy families create healthy communities.

Workers represent an accessible target for integrated delivery of health services, from prevention and health promotion to disease detection and management.

Empowering workers to become healthier reduces social disparities.

KEY FINDING

The majority of the countries that responded to the survey had workers’ health laws and action plans. BUT few incorporated health promotion, noncommunicable disease prevention and control and mental health into their laws and action plans.

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Unhealthy lifestyles, NCDs and mental health issues contribute the most to the disease burden and premature death of workers, to their health care costs and to decreased productivity.

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Unhealthy workers generate higher costs for businesses and governments.

In 2018, cardiovascular disease costs the Western Pacific Region US$10.5 billion in productivity-related (indirect) costs. WHO estimates cardiovascular disease among people aged 35-64 years costs China US$30 billion; 75% of the cost was from lost productivity.