BUSINESS AND HEALTH CONSULTANCY

Contact us
Tel: 020 7959 3015
Email: Info@BusinessandHealth.co.uk

# Newsletter

December 2015

***Special points of interest:-***

Olive oil and breast cancer

- A publication in JAMA Internal Medicine found women benefitting from a diet supplemented with olive oil compared to diets supplemented with nuts or low fat diet. The cancer risk was lowest in the olive oil group followed by the nut group and highest in the low fat group.

Soap and disinfectants

- A publication in the *Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy* showed that use of ordinary soap for hand cleaning is basically as effective as antibacterial soap with triclosan (BMJ 2015;351:h4936). This means possible cost reduction without loss in effectiveness!

Please note our office will be **closed on**

24th December reopening on the 4th January 2016.

**Please Note:** If you expect an urgent need for an assessment to be conducted during the Christmas closure please let us know by 15th December so we can make necessary arrangements.

**Business And Health Consultancy Ltd**
**288 Bishopsgate**
**London**
**EC2M 4QP**

# Presentism

Presentism is defined as an employee attending work despite not being well and unable to perform to usual standards. Recently published research by RAND Europe and Cambridge University identified in the UK mental health problems as a significant cause for loss of productivity, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1084.html. The report estimates the costs due to presentism in the UK of more than £15billion a year. This comes on top of sickness absence costs of about 140 million days a year. Other key findings are musculoskeletal problems and chronic health conditions resulting in higher sickness absence and presentism. A low BMI seems to show an impact on attendance and performance as well as lack of physical activities. Happiness reflects well on attendance and productivity.

# Use of cognitive-enhancing drugs

Life seems to have picked up pace over the last few years. Everybody is expected to reply instantly 24/7. The human body is not built for running non-stop. Humans require breaks. Nights provide rest and experiences of the day can be processed. Some people might experience it as a weakness not to perform top constantly. So why not use cognitive enhancing drugs? They should keep one performing at the top for longer.

Cognitive enhancing drugs are on the market for patients with ADHD or medically related extreme sleepiness. The British Medical Association found increasing evidence that cognitive-enhancing drugs are used by people not suffering from these medical conditions. Used to boost memory and concentration seems to be particularly found in students. However, the medication seems to show very little improvement in people without specific medical problems. A perceived improvement might be a placebo effect. Is it worth the side effects?

As improvement in memory function and concentration seems to be appealing in a variety of jobs particularly for shift workers and jobs with high job demands it is medically much more beneficial to implement a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise, healthy diet, sleep hygiene and good social integration. Cognitive-enhancing drugs are not a fix to boost performance.

# Inattentional blindness

Paying attention and paying attention does not always result in the same outcome. Focusing on one specific task can result in not noticing other things going on at the same time. This is called inattentional or selected blindness. Try your attention and watch this short video clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo

I am not sure what you saw but 60% of people focused on the given task and managed that well. It is not necessarily an illness if a person has not noticed something. It is just that perception is different for every individual. The brain can only focus on a limited number of tasks at a time and the brain scans about 30 to 40 different items of information at one time. These includes vision, smell, sound, temperature, draft, touch and so on. Keep it in mind before judging!