

Workplace NHS Health Checks – 5 years on

Angela Fletton¹, Richard Hayhoe², Justine Hottinger¹, Patrick Lorenzen¹, and Louise Smith¹.

¹Public Health, Norfolk County Council, Norwich, and ²University of East Anglia, Norwich.

Background

NHS Health Check programme has been available in Norfolk since 2010. The check comprises measurements of height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol (TC:HDL ratio), and information gathering of family history and self-reports of behaviour relating to physical activity, smoking and diet. The results are combined to provide a score related to likelihood of the individual experiencing a cardiovascular event within the next ten years (reported as %). The second part of the check is a discussion related to lifestyle and what individuals can do to improve or maintain their health.

Provision of health checks to staff working at Norfolk County Council (NCC) forms part of a wider workplace health programme. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing team at NCC have been providing these checks free of charge to any eligible member of staff. Over 2,300 checks have now been completed since the programme started in 2010 with fifty individuals having returned for their second health check after five years.

Summary of findings for the N=50 repeats

- Average age at baseline was 48 years / 28% male
- BMI – no change in average between baseline and follow-up
- Blood pressure - 73% of those with high BP moved to within normal range at follow-up
- Cholesterol
 - significant reduction in average scores from 4.0 to 3.5
 - 75% of those with a high score (>4) at baseline had moved to within the normal range at follow-up
 - No baseline high risk individuals (>6, n=5) were high risk at follow up
- Physical activity – 60% of inactive and 63% of moderately active had moved up a category by follow-up

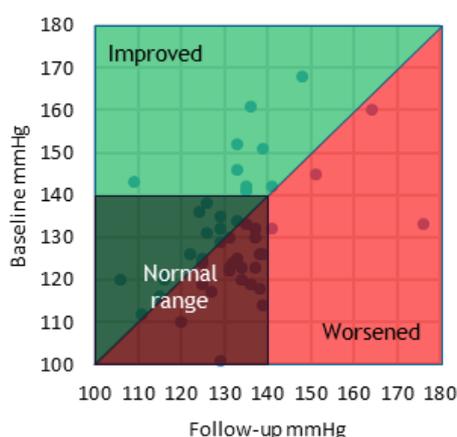


Figure 1. Systolic blood pressure change over 5 years.

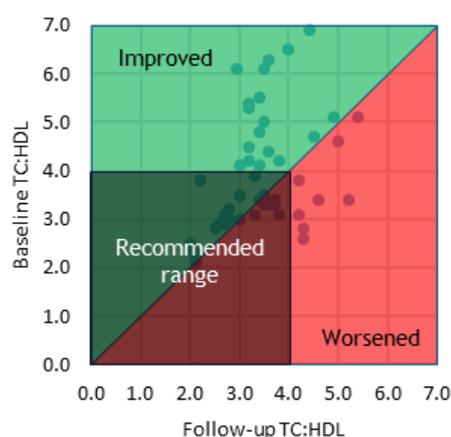


Figure 2. TC:HDL change over 5 years.

Lessons learned

- Workplaces can prove to be useful settings for NHS Health Checks
- Biofeedback seems to be a useful tool to encourage participation in health improvement initiatives
- Employees do discuss their results and experiences of the checks with their colleagues, so consistent quality is imperative to the continuation of the programme
- The focus has been on empowering employees to make changes – does this explain the good results?