



Quantifying and Analyzing Rates of Presenteeism



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Introduction

- Recently, more than ever, presenteeism has become a prominent issue, specifically in healthcare professions.
- Presenteeism is defined as attending work while sick.
- Presenteeism describes the results of burnout in the workforce, such as not functioning properly while at work. Our goal through this project was to determine the main factors that lead to presenteeism in the healthcare setting.
- Additionally, it was proven that professional characteristics, quality work-life balance, and demographics heavily affect presenteeism rates.

Methods

- Data for these analyses come from a larger survey of healthcare provider personality, workplace attitudes, and bias.
- We recruited physicians, advanced practice providers (e.g., physician's assistants, nurse practitioners), and residents with training in emergency medicine or internal medicine (n = 198).
- We surveyed 198 healthcare workers and asked them specific questions about their work and home life in the past year. After determining the number of participants who have engaged in presenteeism, we compared specific variables to that percentage. If the participants admitted to experiencing presenteeism in the survey, we also asked them to rate different scenarios on a scale as to why they decided to show up to work sick.
- Mean age was 36 years old ($M = 36.17, SD = 9.91, \text{range: } 25-71$). 100 participants identified their gender as female, 80 as male, 2 as non-binary, and 3 did not wish to report. Most providers identified their race as White/Caucasian (n = 114), 51 as Asian, 4 as Black, 4 as Native American, 12 as multi-racial or other, 4 did not wish to report; 11 participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic. 92 participants were trained in internal medicine, 78 in emergency medicine, and 15 in "other." Most (n = 169) were physicians (MD or DO). The study was approved by the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (#2006270932).

Discussion

- Through this study, we concluded that 78.79% of participants confirmed that they had experienced presenteeism. Additionally, it was proven that professional characteristics, quality work-life balance, and demographics heavily affect presenteeism rates.
- In our study, healthcare professionals were asked to rate reasons for working while sick from 1-5, 5 meaning extremely important. The highest-rated responses were, "I do not want to let my colleagues down" with an average of 4.6, and "I worry about whether there will be enough staff to take care of patients" with an average of 3.7.
- This data collected through our research aligns with what was predicted. Similarly, our data also matches the data from similar research projects.
- This further solidifies the validity of our data and the fact that there are specific variables that increase presenteeism rates.

Results

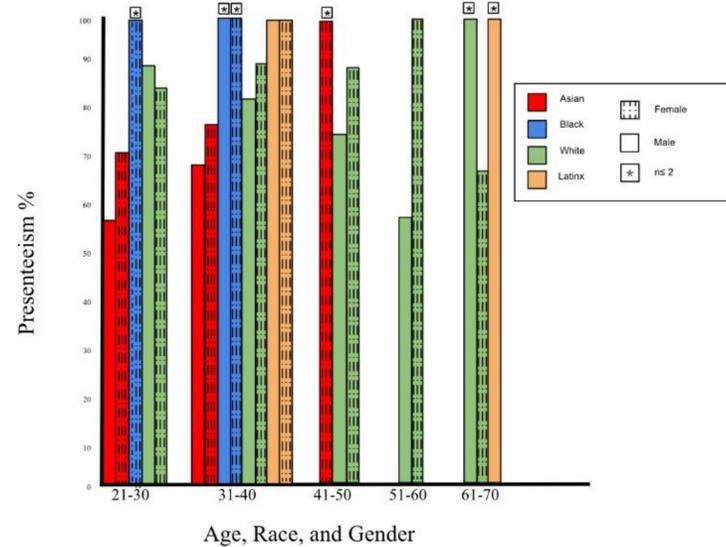


Figure 1: Cross-tabulation Analysis of Presenteeism Percentage (%) by Age, Race, and Gender. Examination of presenteeism percentages across age groups (21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70) with demographic breakdowns including Asian, Black, White, and Latinx races, as well as male and female genders. Sample size: n=198; Average presenteeism in sample: 78.79%. When n ≤ 2 for a pop. it is denoted with an asterisk.

List of Reasons

1. I do not want to let my patients down.
2. I do not want to let my colleagues down.
3. I fear ostracism from my colleagues.
4. The leadership in the area where I work is not supportive of the sick leave policy.
5. I worry about whether there will be enough staff to take care of patients.
6. I have run out of sick leave, sick relief days, or coverage.
7. I am the only person who can carry out a particular task.
8. I am worried about handing off my patients and continuity of care.
9. I come to work because my colleagues work while sick.

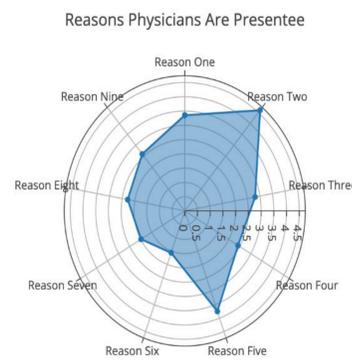


Figure 2: Radar Chart Illustrating Reasons for Physician Presenteeism. Analysis of physician responses (n=198) on a scale of 1-5, depicting reasons for presenteeism, including concerns about patient care, colleague support, fear of ostracism, leadership support, staffing adequacy, sick leave depletion, task uniqueness, continuity of care, and peer influence. Highest average scores observed for 'Not wanting to let colleagues down' (4.6) and 'Concern about staffing adequacy' (3.75), with an average score across all reasons at 2.82.

Conclusion

- This study concluded that there are multiple different variables that result in presenteeism in healthcare settings, such as demographics, quality work-life balance, and professional characteristics.
- It is evident that many healthcare establishments are not adequately staffed and do not have effective employee welfare. If healthcare workers felt that there were a proper amount of staff and systems in place for them when they were sick, they would feel more inclined to use their sick leave.
- This not only affects the employers themselves, but it heavily impacts the ability of effective healthcare that employees are able to provide for their patients. Overall, this dilemma is damaging to the future of workers in healthcare.
- Acknowledging the variables that increase these rates and avoiding them are great steps a healthcare worker can take in order to decrease their likelihood of higher occurrences of presenteeism.

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