Health behaviours of mast and tower climbers who have periodic health assessments

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To examine the impact of periodic medical fitness assessments and health promotion intervention on health behaviours, beliefs and risk awareness in mast and tower climbers employed by a British telecommunication company.

Methods: A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was conducted to explore and compare health behaviours, health beliefs and risk awareness in 3 groups of the climbers who have been having annual occupational fitness assessments with health checks and lifestyle advice for: <5 years, 5-10 years and >10 years. QRisk2-2014 score which was retrieved from the climbers’ medical records was also used to compare these 3 groups in their 10-years cardiovascular risk. All study participants were male and age was adjusted for using multivariate regression analysis.

Results: Survey response rate was 83% which is considered to be a statistically significant at the 5% significance level. Statistical analysis showed that climbers’ health behaviours, health beliefs, risk awareness and their QRisk2-2014 scores were significantly different in the 3 groups of climbers. It also showed that these health parameters were increasingly better across the 3 groups the more medical input they had. This correlation was stronger with health beliefs and risk awareness as compared to health behaviours and QRisk2-2014 scores. These associations were statistically significant at 5% significance level with a confidence interval of 95%.

Conclusion: Regular medical input received by this occupational group may have had an impact on their health behaviours, beliefs, risk awareness and 10-years cardiovascular risk. However, the strong health and safety culture within the organisation may have contributed to the observed differences by having a positive impact on the climber’s health beliefs and risk awareness. This study was cross-sectional, so causal conclusions cannot be drawn. It would help to examine the above health parameters longitudinally in a cohort study using standardised measures.