



The Need for Corporate Wellness

The twin epidemics of obesity and type 2 diabetes pose a great risk to an already strained healthcare system. In South Africa, 31 % of men and 65 % of women are either overweight and obese ⁽¹⁾. Rates of type 2 diabetes have increased and the cost of treating diabetes has quadrupled in the last 7 years ^(2,3). Both preventative and treatment-based programmes require an effective public healthcare system. The Faculty of Public Health of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom defines public health as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organised efforts of society” ⁽⁴⁾. This definition calls upon all members of society, including corporate business to take up their rightful place in public health.

The work environment continues to change, which in several ways increases obesity and subsequently type 2 diabetes. The majority of the working class work more than 7.5 hours a day, which increases their risk of obesity by nearly 250 % compared to those who work less than 5.5 hours a day ⁽⁵⁾. The way we work has also shifted from physical labour to sedentary work, which is also associated with a greater risk of obesity ⁽⁶⁾.

The overall dietary quality of South Africans is high in fat and sugar and low in fruit and vegetables ^(1,7). A second factor to consider is that the food available has shown to influence the dietary intake ⁽⁸⁾. The workplace therefore can either fuel obesity by offering high calorie foods or reduce the risk of obesity through the provision of healthy meals ⁽⁹⁾.

Despite the increased risk of obesity in the modern work environment, corporate wellness programmes have shown to reduce obesity and other chronic diseases of lifestyle ^(9,10).

CDE offers talks and clinical support regarding diabetes at existing corporate wellness events. The speakers include specialist doctors, dietitians, nurses, clinical psychologists and biokineticists.





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