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The implementation of an e-learning tool to improve mental health of healthcare workers and teaching staff during the corona pandemic

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I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

Introduction

- The **corona pandemic** triggered an **increase in mental health issues**, especially among employees working in the **healthcare** and **education sector**.
- Therefore, it is essential to **monitor** employees' **mental health**, and **empower** employees with **skills to manage strain outcomes**.
- In this context, **e-learning** (i.e. StressBalancer) might **improve** employees' **mental health by training** employees' coping skills in order to prevent strain outcomes while working **at a safe distance**.
- This e-poster contains **observations** regarding the **implementation** and **use** of **StressBalancer** within the healthcare and education sector during the corona pandemic.



Material and methods

- StressBalancer is an **e-learning tool** that **focuses on improving employees' mental health by empowering them with active coping skills** (e.g., planning and prioritizing) **to deal with stressful work situations** (e.g., workload). The effects of this e-learning tool have been demonstrated in the past in an experimental intervention study (2017) in which 2,873 employees participated.
- StressBalancer was **transformed to fit the changed work situation** that healthcare and education employees faced **during the corona pandemic**.
 - For example, an additional module was created that includes exercises on the increased workload due to the significantly changed tasks of teaching employees (e.g., distance learning), on feelings of anxiety, and on conflicting expectations (e.g., keeping a distance versus offering quality education).
 - Especially exercises were developed with video fragments, pictures, text fragments and reflection moments.



Material and methods

- Employees working within these sectors were able to **use StressBalancer free of charge** during **two major peaks** in the pandemic (spring / winter of 2020 and spring of 2021).
- The **number of requests** received were **registered** through an onboarding platform.



The coronavirus crisis is causing a great deal of work pressure and stress for many, making it all the more important to pay attention to your mental health. To support you during this challenging period, we are making StressBalancer available again free of charge (until 30 June 2021). StressBalancer can help you to cope with stressors. We provide you with tips on how to prevent stress, exhaustion and tension between colleagues and to increase your own resilience. For more information about StressBalancer, please contact your IDEWE Group regional office.

If you would like to access StressBalancer, please complete the details below and click on 'Send'. You will receive an invitation to take advantage of StressBalancer in the coming week (invitations will be sent on Tuesday and Thursday).



To register, please complete the form below.

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National Register number CBE number/Company registration nu...

E-mail address

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Results and conclusions

- An **increase** of 1% (healthcare sector) and 55% (education sector) in **registrations** was noted between the first and second peak. These observations show an increase of interest in the tool.
- Further, we could draw the following **lessons from the pandemic**:
 1. In a pandemic of this magnitude, it is essential not only to **monitor** the **mental health** of employees, but also to **trigger and activate** them **to deal with stress in a sustainable way**.
 2. **E-learning** could be effective in **supporting mental health on a safe distance**. Intervention studies are needed to further investigate effectiveness.
 3. **Actively listening** to current needs of organizations and their employees proved to be an **important key element** in supporting them.
- **Further information:**
 - Van den Brande, W. (2018). *Exploring the role of coping strategies and coping resources in the prevention of workplace bullying: The development of an online intervention*, PhD Dissertation (EN)
 - <https://www.idewe.be/-/stressbalancer-weerbaarder-tegen-uitputting-stress-en-pesten> (NL/FR)
 - Van den Brande, W., Aussems, J. Het welzijn van het onderwijzend personeel in België in tijden van corona. *TBV - Tijdschr Bedrijfs- en Verzekeringsgeneeskde* **29**, 16–19 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12498-020-1340-8> (NL)

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