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Poster: Health in the NHS: Lifestyle behaviours of hospital employees

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Background: Hospital staff are important role models for health behaviours. The objective of the study was to investigate the health behaviours and wellbeing of employees in a National Health Service (NHS) Trust in the United Kingdom.

Methods: A questionnaire survey was conducted to examine patterns of health behaviours and wellbeing in 1,452 NHS employees including dietary habits, knowledge about physical activity, self- efficacy for physical activity and diet, social support for physical activity and diet, general health, smoking, work performance, job satisfaction and sickness absence. Health behaviours were compared between physically active and physically inactive staff.

Results: Almost half the employees were physically inactive, and almost half were overweight or obese. Over half did not consume five servings of fruit/vegetables per day and 10% were smokers. Physically inactive employees were less likely to engage in other positive health behaviours than their more active counterparts.

Conclusions: NHS employees are not widespread models of healthy lifestyles, with a high proportion being physically inactive, exhibiting poor dietary practices and engaging in other negative health behaviours also. There is a clear need for immediate intervention to improve the health of NHS employees and educate them about the importance of their own health behaviours as role models to others.