

World Heart Day, 29 September 2024, Cardiovascular Health Risks: Proactive Measures for Workplace Wellness

HO CHINH MIN CITY, VIETNAM, September 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As World Heart Day approaches on 29 September, International SOS urges organisations worldwide to implement proactive measures to protect their workforce from cardiovascular disease (CVD). According to the World Health Organization, CVDs remain the leading cause of mortality and disability worldwide, accounting for 17.9 million fatalities annually, mainly attributable to heart attacks and strokes. With over half a billion people affected globally, it is crucial for organisations to adopt strategies that promote heart health and prevent related illnesses among employees.

From 2021 to 2023, International SOS received a significant increase in requests for assistance related to cardiovascular health issues. The number of cases increased by 34.5% from 2021 to 2022 and by an additional 18% from 2022 to 2023.³ This data highlights the growing need for comprehensive cardiovascular health support and the importance of proactive health measures. Notably, 86% of the cases involving heart-specific ailments were within the male population during the same period.

The risk of developing cardiovascular disease hinges on various factors, encompassing controllable elements like lifestyle choices, tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption, along with uncontrollable factors such as genetics, gender and race. Moreover, several medical conditions, including diabetes and obesity can elevate the risk of heart disease.

Dr Olivier LO, Group Medical Director, Occupational Health Services, at International SOS, comments,

“Organisations worldwide have a Duty of Care to foster work environments that promote the heart health of their employees, as this can play a significant role in preventing cardiovascular



disease. With World Heart Day upon us, it is a great reminder of the importance of heart health initiatives at work. Heart disease may significantly impact employers financially through direct costs like healthcare services and medications, as well as indirect costs such as absenteeism and presenteeism. Additionally, there are costs associated with hiring temporary staff or overtime pay to cover absent employees, as well as potential increases in health insurance premiums.

Proactively addressing cardiovascular health can help organisations mitigate these risks. By implementing comprehensive health and wellness programmes, such as regular health screenings, fitness initiatives, and educational workshops on healthy lifestyle choices, organisations can help their employees maintain better heart health. This not only reduces the incidence of heart disease and stroke but also lowers healthcare costs and improves overall productivity. In the long run, investing in employee health can lead to a more sustainable and productive future for the workforce.”

To help organisations mitigate cardiovascular risks among their workforce, International SOS recommends the following seven measures:

1. **Create a Heart-Healthy Culture:** Foster a workplace culture that prioritises health and wellbeing. Encourage employees to take breaks, stay hydrated and seek medical advice when needed. A supportive environment can motivate employees to adopt and maintain heart-healthy habits.
2. **Encourage Regular Health Screenings:** Offer regular health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol levels and other cardiovascular risk factors. Early detection and management of these risk factors can prevent the development of more serious conditions.
3. **Healthy Eating Initiatives:** Provide access to nutritious and healthy food options in the workplace. Educate employees on the importance of a heart-healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins.
4. **Promote Regular Physical Activity:** Encourage employees to engage in regular physical activity through workplace wellness programs and facilities.
5. **Stress Management Programmes:** Implement programmes and provide resources to help employees manage stress, which is a significant risk factor for CVDs.
6. **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Organise workshops on cardiovascular health to raise awareness and educate employees about the importance of maintaining a healthy heart and the steps to reduce the risks.
7. **Smoking Cessation Support:** Tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke are among the leading causes of cardiovascular disease globally, contributing to approximately 17% of all CVD deaths. Provide support and resources for employees who wish to quit smoking, including counselling and smoking cessation programmes.

Join International SOS’ webinar ‘Building Heart-Healthy Work Environment’ on 26 September 2024, where our experts will discuss vital cardiovascular disease (CVD) prevention strategies and response plans to avoid fatalities among your employees.

Saiful
TQPR Malaysia
[email us here](#)

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