Work engagement among Dutch dental hygienists

Yvonne A.B. Buunk-Werkhoven, RDH PhD¹,³ Vanessa R.Y. Hollaar, RDH MSc² Corrie Jongbloed, RDH³

The aim of the study

To investigate the level of work engagement among Dutch dental hygienists (NVM-members).

Methods

Members of the Dutch Dental Hygienists’ Association (Nederlandse Vereniging van Mondhygiënisten; NVM) completed a questionnaire, including the short form Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9; Schaufeli et al., 2006): a hypothesized three-factor structure of work engagement (Vigor, Dedication and Absorption). Statements about how one feels at work were answered on 7-point rating scales (0 = never to 6 = always).

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dental Hygienists (N=490)</th>
<th>Manual (N=9679)</th>
<th>Dentists^ (N=491)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBES-9*</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigor#</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication**#</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absorption**#</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^UWES-15  *Significant differences with manual norms (p < 0.01)  #Significant differences with Dutch dentists (p < 0.01) (Te Brake et al., 2007)

Conclusions

Dutch dental hygienists reported a (very) high level of work engagement. A lot of dental hygienists experienced at least once a week to daily a high level of well-being at their work. On work engagement and on the three dimensions, dental hygienists reported not only higher mean scores compared with the manual norms, based upon a variety of professions, but also in comparison with the mean scores among Dutch dentists.
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Background and Method

• The Dutch government has focused on reallocation within the field of oral health care

• DH’s were required to take responsibility for low risk patients with stable oral health; focus on prevention/promotion “from cure to care and the importance of oral health in relation to general health”

• Several studies about job satisfaction, no recent data available about work engagement

• Work engagement: ‘Engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption’

• Determination of level of work engagement of DH’s provides insights on 3 dimensions and indicates the well-being at work

• Use of the short form Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)

Conclusion and Discussion

• DH’s reported a (very) high level of work engagement

"they have a lot of energy, are very enthusiastic about their jobs and they get absorbed by their work"

• On the 3 dimensions, DH’s reported higher mean scores compared with

other professions (3) and Dutch dentists (4)

• Further research in other countries is essential (5)

• An explanation could be the phenomenon designated as ‘relative deprivation’(6):

subjective job dissatisfaction, not caused by an objective work situation, but caused by the relative
position as compared to the work situation of another, e.g., dentists…