

## Use of Telephone Counselling in Employee Assistance Program

**Authors :** Andy S.K. Cheng, Samuel Leung, Cindy Kwok, Hector Tsang

**Abstract :** Background: Telephone counselling is one of the essential interventions that can be found in most of the Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). The purposes of this study were to (1) explore the trend of the telephone counselling from 2003-2016 in Hong Kong; (2) explore which EAP issue requires more follow-up; and 3) examine the relationship between the EAP issues and demographic data such as gender and job ranking. Method: Date of EAP services usage was collected from EAP providers in Hong Kong during 2003-2016. EAP issues were categorized into two domains, namely workplace issues and personal issues. Each domain has 12 sub-categories. Two hypotheses were formulated in this study (1) there was a gender difference in EAP issues and the follow-up hours; and (2) there was a significant difference between job ranking, EAP issues and follow-up hours. Results: A total of eight hundred and ninety-three valid cases were identified for analysis. Of them, three hundred and forty-three cases sought for follow-up. The duration of follow-up by hours was calculated for each of the follow-up cases. The results of the study shows that the top three workplace issues that required the longest duration of follow-up were (1) workload, (2) supervisor-subordinate relationship; and (3) team member's relationship. On the other hand, the top three personal issues that required the longest duration of follow-up were (1) parenting/parent-child relationship, (2) family care, and (3) marital relationship. Two-way ANOVA was performed to compare the total follow-up hours (excluding first intake) between gender and EAP issues. There was no statistical significance for gender ( $p = .891$ ), but a statistically significant main effect for EAP issues ( $p < .001$ ) was found. Post-hoc analysis (Tukey's test) showed that total follow-up hour in personal issues was statistically significant higher than that in handling workplace issues ( $p < .001$ ). However, there was no statistically significant interaction effect between gender and EAP issues ( $p = .879$ ) and between job ranking and EAP issues ( $p = .843$ ). Conclusion: Telephone counselling is a very common intervention in addressing EAP issues arising from workplace and personal level in Hong Kong. It was frequently used to handle interpersonal relationships and the service usage was independent of gender and job ranking.

**Keywords :** employee assistance program, follow-up time, interpersonal relationships, telephone counselling

**Conference Title :** ICHRDM 2018 : International Conference on Human Resources Development and Management

**Conference Location :** Zurich, Switzerland

**Conference Dates :** July 30-31, 2018