

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION – EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG MEDICAL RECORD CLERKS IN POLAND

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Purpose: The main purpose of this research was to indicate the level of medical record clerks satisfaction related to their work in medical entities in Poland.

Design/methodology/approach: Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state that results from interactions between work experience and organizational environment. In theoretical part the difference between satisfaction, morale, enjoyment and disenjoyment were discussed as well as methods and implications of employee satisfaction examining were presented. Empirical studies were conducted in December 2021 among medical record clerks using Google questionnaire and included 125 participants to the research sample. To create the questionnaire used in the research, short form of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was utilized. MSQ is publicly available for all researchers on the University of Minnesota website. The survey was supplemented with additional statements related to work content to receive more information.

Findings: The outcomes revealed that most respondents perform tasks beyond the scope of their duties, there is a significant imbalance of work between different days, and suggested improvements are rarely or never taken into consideration. Among the main suggestions mentioned by the respondents as leading to improvement was a change in work procedures.

Research limitations/implications: The conducted research deserves to be repeated, taking into account a larger group of respondents, but also through differentiation depending on job positions. It would also be recommended to conduct qualitative studies to go deeper with received answers or to utilize long version of the MSQ.

Practical implications: As an outcome of the research, potential actions to be taken to improve work satisfaction were suggested. Findings of this research can be applied by managers of medical clerk departments to reorganize working conditions in order to enhance job satisfaction.

Social implications: It is worth to investigate the level of employee satisfaction because it affects motivation to perform tasks and work attitude.

Originality/value: Medical record clerks work in medical entities, which are characterized by specific operational conditions. Managing employees involves particular actions, yet no similar study has been conducted among this occupational group.

Keywords: employee satisfaction, medical records clerk.

1. Introduction

Work is a source of fulfilment of various human needs in modern societies. In particular, it satisfies biological, social and psychological needs. Satisfactory work is a substantial element of a fortunate life (Głowacka and Mojs, 2015). Employee satisfaction has a direct impact on individual's behaviour at workplace. It influences manners of employees' perception on positive and negative emotions connected with vocational tasks fulfilment (Abuhashesh, Al-Dmour and Masa'deh, 2019). Happier employees achieve higher productivity. This encourages employers to examine employee morale and job satisfaction in order to adjust the working environment (Yeleyko and Yarova, 2021). The importance of employee satisfaction is becoming increasingly relevant for organizations as research confirms that satisfaction affects both attitude toward work and motivation to complete tasks (Głowacka and Mojs, 2015).

The delivery of public services, including health services, and the continuous improvement in quality is determined by motivation, competence and performance of employees. Therefore, affecting employee motivation and providing a suitable career path is crucial (Ren and Marcinkowski, 2021). In addition, a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and job stability can be demonstrated (Abuhashesh et al., 2019). Moreover, lower absenteeism, commitment, drive towards work and loyalty also show a positive correlation (Jędrzejczak-Gas and Wyrwa, 2020). Job satisfaction can be defined in many ways (Ingram and Głód, 2014). One of the job satisfaction definitions is a pleasant or positive emotional state that results from complex interactions between the work experience and the organizational environment (Filho, Souza and Elias, 2016). Satisfaction can be obtained through the degree to which individual needs are met, individual values are satisfied, and from differences between the individual expectations and what the job offers (Batura et al., 2016). To clear the meaning of concept, in the next part of the article differences between satisfaction, morale, enjoyment and disenjoyment are presented.

It is worth underlining that enjoyment is an individual variable and it is not the same as morale which is a group variable. Morale refers to attractiveness of the group and the willingness of individuals to remain in it (Armstrong and Taylor, 2016), while job enjoyment is identified as a positive attitude towards working conditions, performed tasks, and interactions with co-workers and supervisors. Moreover, work enjoyment is an insufficient however an obligatory condition for job satisfaction achievement. In addition, it is compulsory to create conditions for development and to enable the employees to use their skills and talents, as well as to give them freedom of action to achieve job satisfaction (Juchnowicz, 2014). In contrast, the factors that shape satisfaction are different from those responsible for employee disenjoyment. Consequently, these concepts cannot be treated as opposites (Filho et al., 2016). However, there is a link between job disenjoyment and the motivation of employees to perform

their jobs and accomplish their tasks. It leads to the conclusion that employee dissatisfaction indirectly affects the costs suffered by the organization due to negative occurrences (Głowacka and Mojs, 2015).

The consequences of employee disenjoyment are numerous, including decreased engagement, creativity and quality of decision-making, lower productivity, higher levels of personnel turnover, and higher rates of short-term absenteeism (2-3 days). Moreover, it contains more frequent work-related accidents, experiencing stress, aggression or alienation, more frequent workplace conflicts, decreased satisfaction and quality of life. Once an employee feels content, it does not yet mean that they are experiencing job satisfaction. In the case of job enjoyment, the determinants of positive attitude are external conditions, while achieving job satisfaction requires the interaction of internal factors (Juchnowicz, 2014). Factors determining employee satisfaction or contributing to lack of satisfaction can be divided into three categories: personal, situational, and internal. Personal factors are related to employee's individual personality traits and education. Situational factors refer to the characteristics of the job itself and the nature of the organization in which the employee is hired. Internal factors concern the conditioning of the pursued profession (Domagała et al., 2018).

Among factors affecting job satisfaction that are worth mentioning are the following: intrinsic motivational factors that relate to work content; quality of supervision that affects employee attitudes and relates to informal contacts between employees; success, by itself, enhanced if employees recognize it as the full realization of one's potential; failure, triggering a mechanism opposite to success (Armstrong and Taylor, 2016). When characterizing job satisfaction, three aspects can be distinguished:

1. the cognitive aspect, which includes the employee's knowledge of various working conditions, forming opinions and beliefs,
2. the behavioural aspect, which is expressed in actions taken, as well as behaviour and a certain attitude towards work,
3. the emotional aspect, associated with the attitude towards the job and the environment (Juchnowicz, 2004).

In the following part of the article methods of job satisfaction measurement and practical implications of this action are discussed.

2. Methods and implications of examining employee satisfaction

In practical terms, the need for employee satisfaction studying results from the necessity to identify actions that managers should undertake to motivate employees and prevent them from leaving the organization (Kopertyńska, 2009). In addition to the necessity to retain employees within the units, unstable economic situation, legislative changes along with increased

competition and growing awareness of patients represent some of the challenges for medical entities in Poland (Gołębiowski, Wojnarowska and Jędrzejczyk, 2017). In health care organizations, staff plays an important role in fulfilling the mission of public entities and achieving the goals set. In addition, the employees hired in the organization determine the efficiency of the operation. Therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to adequate human resource management, especially in the areas of service provision (Ziółkowska and Szmit, 2018). Among many benefits of conducting employee satisfaction surveys, the most notable are: finding out employees' opinions about the management tools and methods used within the organization, revealing the pros and cons of the motivational tools in use, identifying factors determining employee satisfaction, pinpointing malfunctions in the employee motivation process and specifying their causes, improving communication and cooperation (Głowacka and Mojs, 2015). To perform employee satisfaction measurement, mainly quantitative research using survey questionnaires is used (Juchnowicz, 2014). Research on employee satisfaction can be performed by analysing individual groups of factors that shape satisfaction, with a focus on a selected aspect of work.

A common example of a measurement tool is the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS), developed by P. Spector of the University of South Florida in the United States. Questionnaire consists of 36 statements which allow to assess job satisfaction in 9 dimensions (Serafin and Doboszyńska, 2018). These dimensions are following: benefits, contingent rewards, communication co-workers, nature of work, pay, promotion and supervision. JSS was developed to conduct satisfaction measurement among employees in public sector (Batura et al., 2016). JSS tool is recommended for group surveys and should not be used for individual assessment. In 2018, JSS was used to assess the satisfaction of nurses working in public hospitals in Poland. Analysis of the results can help in creating a work environment that encourages people to enter and pursue work in the health care field (Serafin and Doboszyńska, 2018).

Globally popular method used to assess overall employee satisfaction is the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), available on the University of Minnesota website (Ingram and Hunger, 2014). The tool was thoroughly tested and validated using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is used to assess the reliability of psychological tests and corresponds to the internal consistency of the test (Martins and Proença, 2012). MSQ allows the measurement of social values and work needs on the basis of job satisfaction. The questionnaire comes in a long version and a short form (Kamarulzaman and Nordin, 2012). The survey in the shortened version includes twenty issues that most accurately represent the baseline areas from the original one hundred item version. The statements included in the questionnaire should be rated using a five-point Likert scale (with a range of 1-5: 1 – very dissatisfied, 2 – dissatisfied, 3 – neutral, 4 – satisfied and 5 – very satisfied), designed to assess the acceptability of a phenomenon (Martins and Proença, 2012). According to the Vocational Psychology Research, University of Minnesota website, *All forms are available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. This license permits the free use of this*

tool for research or clinical purposes without written permission, thus making it free to use for scientific purposes.

MSQ has already been applied to study the satisfaction level of employees working in health care in Poland on the example of oncological nurses (Piotrkowska, Jarzynkowski and Książek, 2020), physiotherapists (Barabasz et al., 2017) and hospital employees overall (Ingram and Hunger, 2014). Conducting a survey dedicated to medical record clerks will determine the average satisfaction level of administrative staff.

3. Research method and research sample

The aim of the research is to assess the general level of satisfaction of administrative personnel in health care units in Poland. Also, to identify areas and factors that are of key importance for shaping job satisfaction in the opinion of respondents. It is worth highlighting that job satisfaction study is based on subjective feelings of the respondents (Kopertyńska, 2009). The obtained results will allow to present changes that are possible to implement in medical entities aiming employees satisfaction improvement in administrative positions.

For the purposes of this study, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), available on the University of Minnesota website, was utilized. The authors translated the original questionnaire into Polish in an attempt to make it meaningful on many levels to the study population while taking the utmost care to ensure that the statements corresponded as closely as possible to the original version. The study was conducted in December 2021 via online Google forms made available to a private social media group of female medical registrars or medical statisticians. Participation in the research was voluntary and the responses provided were anonymous. Respondents were informed that survey results would be used only for scientific purposes and will be analysed collectively. In order to ensure the reliability of the answers, the questions in the metric were designed in such a manner that it was not possible to verify the place of work of the participants. Basic information concerning the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1.
Interviewee basic information

Variable	Share (%)
Gender	
Female	100%
Years of occupational practice in a particular entity	
Less and equal to 5 years	62%
6-20 years	36%
More than 20 years	2%

Cont. table 1

Years of occupational practice in general	
Less and equal to 5 years	22%
6-20 years	64%
More than 20 years	14%
Type of employment contract	
Employment for an indefinite period	80%
Employment for a specific period	17%
Others, including contract of mandate	3%
Number of workplaces	
1	84%
More than 1	16%
Type of facility according to source of funding	
Public	63%
Private	30%
Both, public and private	7%

Source: own elaboration based on own research.

Only women participated in the survey due to the way the questionnaires were made available. The largest share of respondents is employed under an indefinite contract at a single workplace. Most individuals work for an entity whose medical services are publicly funded. Furthermore, most respondents work in hospitals. Taking into account years of practice in a particular entity, the most numerous group consisted of people working at their position from 1 to 5 years, while considering occupational practice in general the most significant number of respondents had 6-20 years of experience. The results obtained are discussed in detail in the following section.

4. Findings

Respondents were asked a number of questions related to perceived satisfaction as well as to aspects of their work associated with job satisfaction. In the initial question, study participants were asked to evaluate their overall job satisfaction including all aspects of their job, while the following question was focused on overall life satisfaction. The results are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

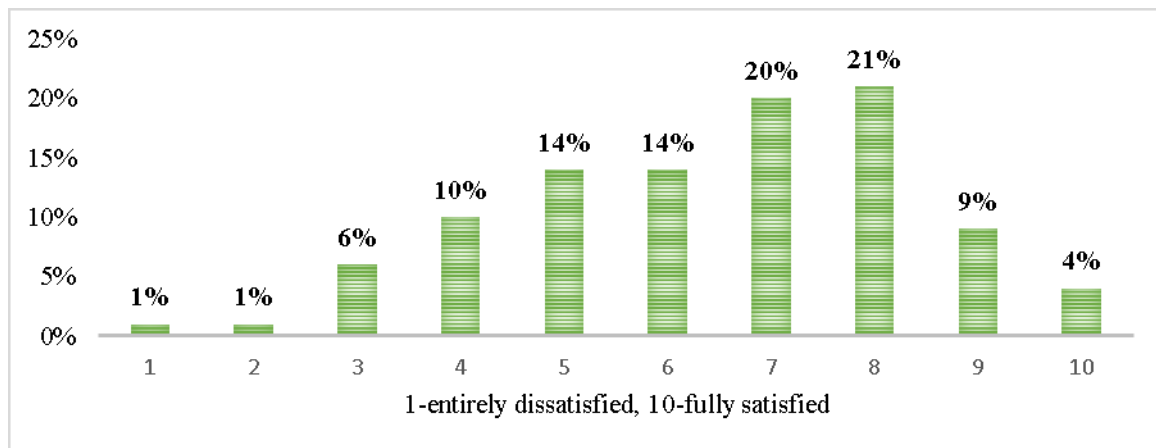


Figure 1. Taking all factors into account, how satisfied are you with your current job? Source: own research.

The largest number of respondents indicated a score of 8 (21%) and 7 (20%), with an average job satisfaction indicated as 6.42. This means that the average satisfaction is above median. Satisfaction with the current job took a greater divergence of results in relation to work experience.

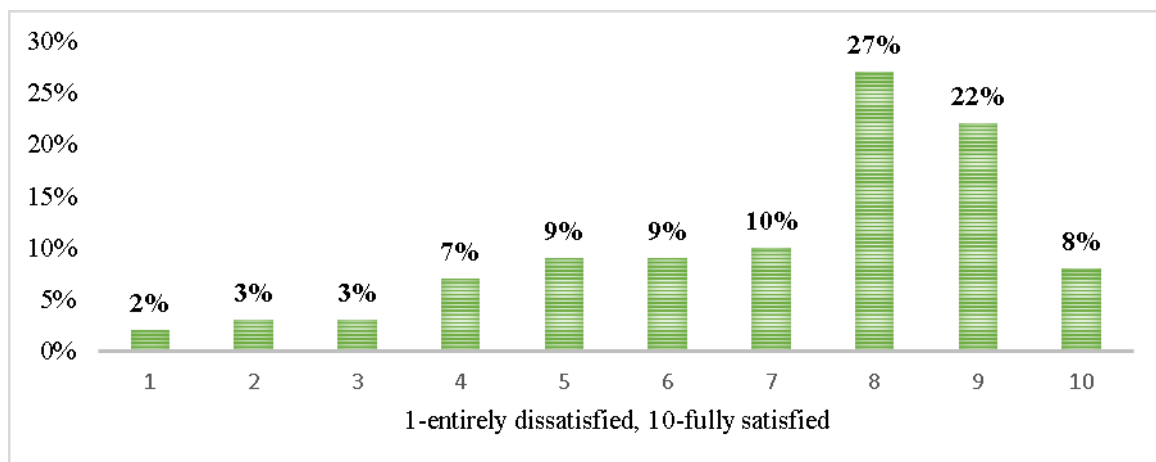


Figure 2. In general, how satisfied are you with your current life? Source: own research.

Analysing responses to the life satisfaction question, the mean of responses was 7.02, with the most number of responses ranking scores 8 (27%) and 9 (22%). This means that the respondents of the study, on average, are more satisfied with their life than their occupation.

The core question of the research was to determine the level of satisfaction for each work-related aspect using a five-point Likert scale. The number of indicated values and the arithmetic mean of the results are presented in the Table 2.

Table 2.
MSQ results

Statement	A	B	C	D	E	Average
The chances for advancement on this job	41	45	24	14	1	2,11
My pay and the amount of work I do	43	38	23	17	4	2,21
The way company policies are put into practice	29	41	36	15	4	2,39
The working conditions	27	33	39	24	2	2,53
The praise I get for doing a good job	32	35	21	25	12	2,60
The chance to be "somebody" in the community	22	36	31	29	7	2,70
The freedom to use my own judgment	20	31	38	30	6	2,77
The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	19	31	39	30	6	2,78
The way my job provides for steady employment	19	39	28	28	11	2,78
The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	23	28	32	35	7	2,80
The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	29	23	29	30	14	2,82
The chance to tell people what to do	22	20	43	35	5	2,85
The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	24	20	39	30	12	2,89
The way my boss handles his/her workers	16	37	23	36	13	2,94
Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	12	26	41	41	5	3,01
The chance to do different things from time to time	15	23	37	39	11	3,06
Being able to keep busy all the time	14	28	24	51	8	3,09
The way my co-workers get along with each other	18	21	25	38	22	3,18
The chance to work alone on the job	10	28	26	49	12	3,20
The chance to do things for other people	15	10	21	54	25	3,51

Legend: (A-very dissatisfied, B- dissatisfied, C-neutral, D-satisfied, E-very satisfied).

Source: Vocational Psychology Research, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, University of Minnesota, retrieved from: <https://vpr.psych.umn.edu/msq-minnesota-satisfaction-questionnaire>, date of access: 19.12.2021.

When analysing the mean scores obtained for each statement indicated in the questionnaire, the discrepancy ranged from 2.11 to 3.51. Six aspects were rated above 3.0 on average and they include: being able to do things that don't go against my conscience, the chance to do different things from time to time, being able to keep busy all the time, the way my co-workers get along with each other, the chance to work alone on the job, the chance to do things for other people.

Survey participants were also asked several additional job-related questions concerning occurrence of certain phenomena that may negatively affect satisfaction in order to deepen the understanding of the satisfaction issue and to draw more insightful conclusions. Therefore, survey participants were requested to rate the frequency of these phenomena on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). The first of these questions and the distribution of responses are shown in Figure 3.

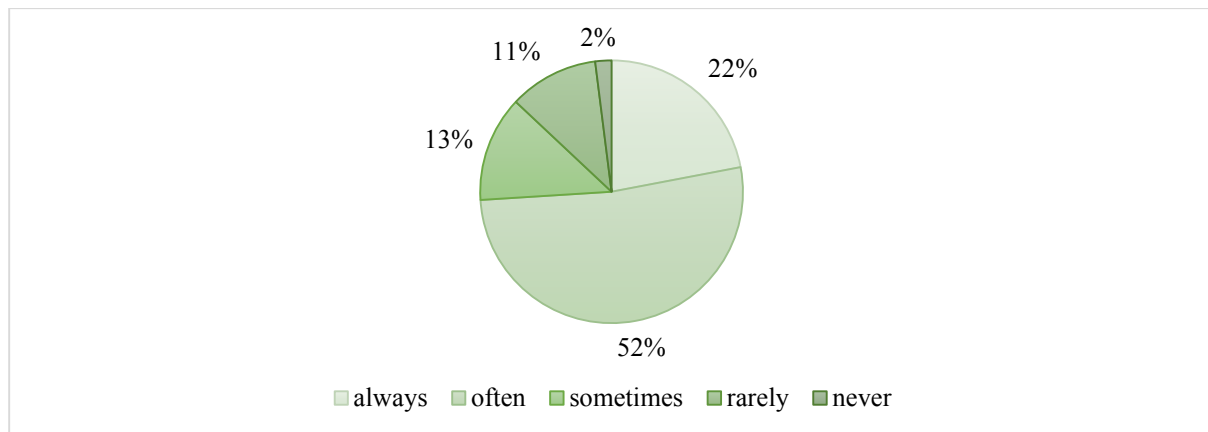


Figure 3. How often are you expected to do work exceeding the scope of your job? Source: own research.

Nearly 3 out of 4 respondents indicated that they are always or often expected to do work beyond the call of their duty, and only 2% indicated that they are never asked to. This indicates a severe pressure to do extra-curricular work not included in the contract. From the supplemental question, it appears that in most cases, medical record clerks are carrying out tasks to be handled by a physician.

The next question concerns the occurrence of disparity in the amount of work load according to a particular workday. The results are shown in Figure 4.

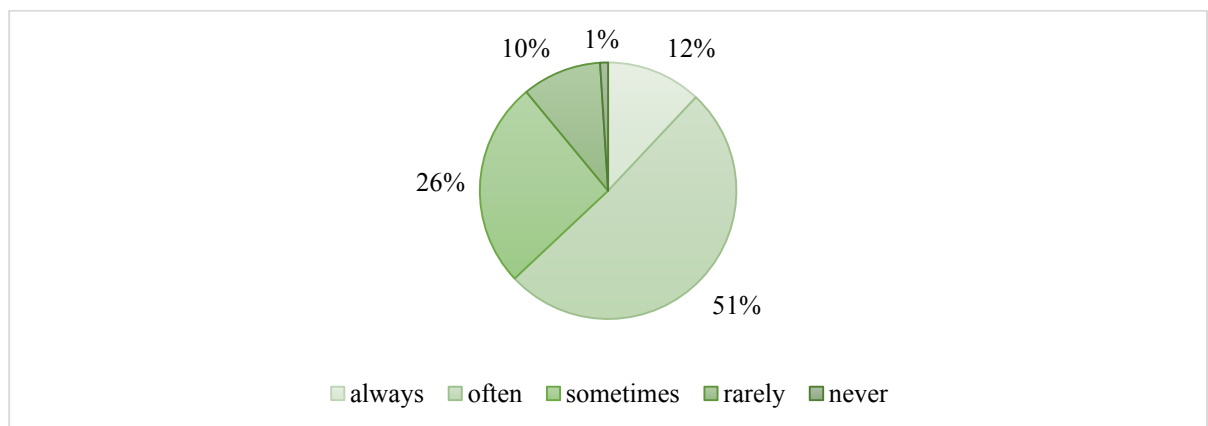


Figure 4. How often in your everyday work is there a great disparity in the amount of work to be done per day? Source: own research.

When analysing the disproportion of workload per day, more than half of the respondents indicated that such a phenomenon occurs frequently. The amount of work per day may vary due to informal requests to perform particular ad-hoc tasks. In relation to this, the next question concerns the possibility to complete all daily tasks before the end of the workday. The results are presented in Figure 5.

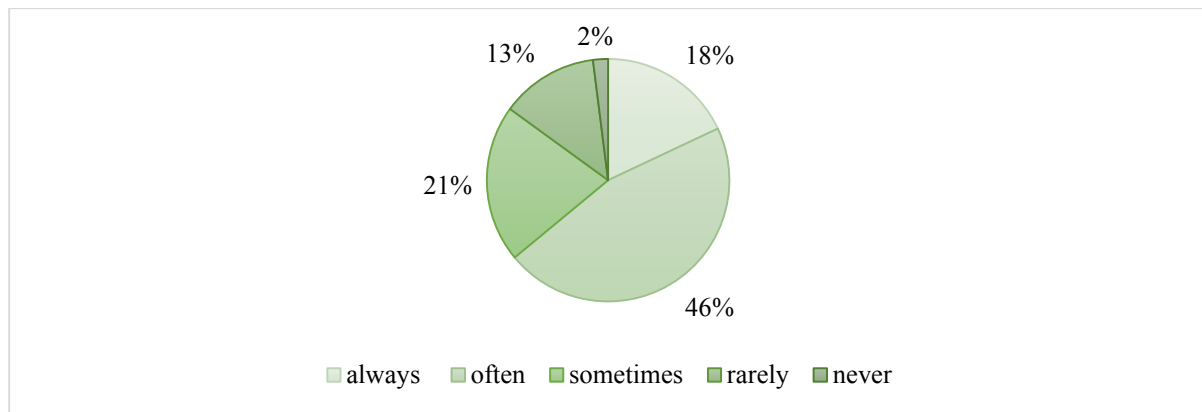


Figure 5. How often do you complete all your assignments before the end of your shift? Source: own research.

The results are similar to the ones in the workload disparity question, so it is reasonable to assume that the potential of completing all daily tasks before the deadline is related precisely to the amount of work given during the day. This means that almost half of the respondents indicated that they are able to complete all tasks often, while 21% sometimes and 18% always, respectively. It can also mean that employees are well organized because they are usually able to complete all of their duties within the same day, despite differences in the workload.

Another question addressed the incorporation of suggestions shared for improving procedures and working conditions (Figure 6).

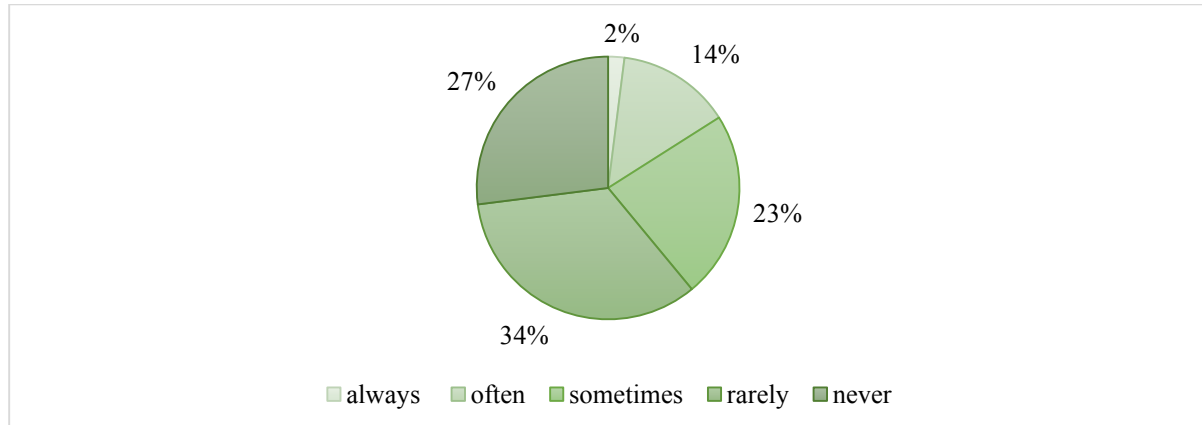


Figure 6. How often are your suggestions for improving procedures and working conditions implemented on an ongoing and effective basis? Source: own research.

Considering the results obtained, as many as 61% of the respondents indicated that the suggestions given on improving procedures and working conditions are rarely or never being implemented. What is more, suggestions made by only 16% of participants are taken into practice more frequently than sometimes, while suggestions made by as many as 27% of respondents have never been implemented. This illustrates a reluctance towards changes and improvements in operational areas that could significantly aid work organization and reduce the disparity of workload over particular days.

Lastly, an open question regarding possible actions to be taken to improve satisfaction was included at the end of the questionnaire. Among mentioned actions that could potentially increase medical record clerks' satisfaction, most respondents indicated that changing the procedures applying to the job (46%), as well as paid overtime (45%) would be the key. Moreover, necessity of greater computerization and work automation (29%) and task-based rather than time-based work model (27%) were commonly mentioned. Surprisingly, a salary increase (9%) and a change of supervisor (7%) were relatively rarely mentioned. Among others, respondents also listed the hiring of additional staff due to an overabundance of work for one person, the need to establish precise tasks for the job, improvement of social conditions, as well as greater appreciation and respect from patients.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The answers received in the survey represent diversity of opinions. Satisfaction of employees is associated with motivation to perform tasks and their productivity. The declared average level of satisfaction according to the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire is 2.81 (where 2 means dissatisfied and 3 means neutral), therefore in order to increase employee engagement efforts to improve employee satisfaction are worth taking. When considering the supplemental questions, 75% of the respondents perform tasks beyond the scope of their duties, thus it seems crucial to redefine the range of responsibilities assigned to the profession and to adhere to the terms of the contract, otherwise to implement benefits for extra-curricular work. With half of the respondents indicating the occurrence of work disparity varying from day to day, introduction of a task-based work model should be considered even more so. As for the question about suggestions to make improvements, 61% of those usually do not meet with supervisor approval. At this point, it would be relevant to investigate further what is the exact reason for the rejection of the proposed solutions. Perhaps the reasons for rejection are financial issues, the absence of positions responsible for improving procedures, or reluctance to implement any changes. Remarkably, the majority of participants are most frequently able to complete the tasks assigned for the day. Among the key improvements mentioned by respondents, the necessity to change work procedures was the number one priority. Adequate management of health care entities is essential to ensure sustainability of care which is vital to the lives and health of patients, so it is advisable to ensure its effectiveness.

6. Limitations

Considering all the results obtained in the empirical study, some limitations were found and they represent potential directions for future research. First of all, individuals participating in the study represented a variety of healthcare entities. For future study, it is relevant to conduct dedicated surveys for a specific group of employees according to the type of medical facility, department, or specific responsibilities in order to obtain the maximum comparability of results. Secondly, it is reasonable to explore the topic in qualitative research and to conduct individual in-depth interviews with respondents in order to understand the underlying reasons of the declared phenomena. Lastly, the study utilized the short version of MSQ questionnaire, which revealed some significant domains affecting job satisfaction in the group of medical record clerks. In order to improve the insight into the issue, it would be recommendable to use the full version of the research questionnaire, which would require more time spent by the respondents, as well as a direct supervision over the survey's undertaking, both of which would be far more achievable from the organizational level.

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Tool based on

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