

PERCEIVED ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
PROFESSIONALS CONCERNING EMPLOYEE
DRUG TESTING AND THE
ORGANIZATIONAL
IMPACT

By

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Bachelor of Arts

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Norman, Oklahoma

1978


Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 1986

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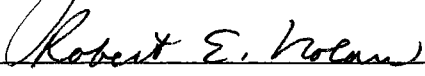



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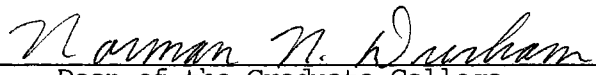
Thesis Approved:



Thesis Advisor







Dean of the Graduate College

PREFACE

This study was conducted in order to identify the attitudes of a group of employee assistance professionals concerning employee drug testing and the organizational impact of such policies. Because drug testing within American businesses and organizations is a relatively new procedure, this study was undertaken to provide new information in this area.

The author wishes to express her appreciation to her thesis adviser, Dr. John L. Baird, for his assistance and support throughout this study. Appreciation is also extended to other committee members, Dr. Thomas Smith and Dr. Robert Nolan.

A special acknowledgement is extended to Mr. Gary Fair for his time and effort as I struggled to begin this project. Thanks are also extended to Ms. Peggy Williams, my typist and friend.

Finally, a special thanks to my husband, David, for his constant love and encouragement and to my daughter, Lindsay, whose early morning feedings provided ample time for contemplating the issues herein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Objectives.....	3
Limitations of the Study.....	4
Definitions.....	4
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	6
A History of Employee Counseling.....	6
A Definition of Employee Assistance Programs.....	7
Employee Assistance Program Models.....	9
Substance Abuse in the Workplace.....	12
Employers Response to Substance Abuse.....	15
Summary.....	18
III. PROCEDURES.....	20
The Population.....	20
The Instrument.....	20
Data Analysis.....	22
IV. FINDINGS.....	24
Limitations of the Instrument.....	24
Results.....	25
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	40
Summary.....	40
Conclusions.....	41
Recommendations.....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	46
APPENDIX.....	48

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Professional Roles of Respondents.....	26
II. Types of Organizations in Which Respondents are Employed.....	26
III. Type of Employee Assistance Programs Reported in use by Respondents.....	27
IV. Scope of Employee Assistance Reported by Respondents.....	28
V. Union Status of Organizations Reported by Respondents.....	28
VI. Current Drug Testing Policies of Organizations Reported by Respondents.....	29
VII. Reasons for Implementing Drug Testing.....	30
VIII. Suggested Action to be Taken on Positive Results.....	32
IX. Suggested Drug Testing Participants.....	33
X. Effects of Drug Testing on Organizational Climate.....	34
XI. Effects of Drug Testing on Employee Morale.....	34
XII. Effects of Drug Testing on the Employee Assistance Program.....	35
XIII. EAP Professional's Perceptions of Drug Testing..	37
XIV. Potential Problems of Drug Testing.....	38
XV. Benefits of Drug Testing.....	39

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are designed to help the employee whose job performance is negatively affected by an inability to cope with personal problems. The overall productivity of an organization hinges on the ability of the EAP to help the employee resolve conflicts and improve job performance. The EAP professional is trained to recognize the employee warning signals and to train supervisors to recognize these signs as well. Troubled employees may seek help from the EAP counselor voluntarily or they may be referred to the counselor by their supervisor who notices the employee exhibiting some of the warning signs.

Common warning signs include high absenteeism, tardiness, inability to work cooperatively with co-workers, accidents, change in appearance, avoidance of others, memory loss and demonstrating a poor attitude. (Ramsey, 1985) The troubled employee may be having marital or financial problems, facing an unwanted pregnancy, experiencing job dissatisfaction or living with an alcoholic or abusive partner. Whatever the problem, the troubled employee will often decrease organizational productivity

and increase waste and insurance costs. These accumulated costs are so great to an organization, that to many, it is well worth the investment to develop an EAP to help curtail the spiraling costs. (Ramsey, 1985)

Many of the problems confronting employees stem from a substance abuse problem. Many employees live with alcoholics or drug abusers which causes great turmoil in their personal life. The substance abuser may suffer from hangovers, memory loss, errors of judgment and intoxication or impairment on the job. "Costs to the employer include absenteeism, poor decision making, loss of training investment and accidents." (McGuirk, 1980, p. 17)

In response to this growing problem, many employers are implementing employee drug testing policies. Employees who test positive for drug use are terminated or given an opportunity for detoxification with assistance from the company's EAP. Many substance abusers are referred to treatment facilities at company expense on a one time only basis. If they successfully complete the program and remain substance-free, they are assured of employment. If they deny the problem exists, refuse the treatment program or resort to substance abuse again, they are terminated. (Ideas and Trends in Personnel, 1985)

Although organizations are primarily looking at the cost figures, the EAP is indeed a helping process. The EAP, like other counseling services, is designed to help

the employee and provide possible solutions during a time of crisis.

Problem

The problem centers on the attitudes of employee assistance professionals concerning employee drug testing and the effect it will have upon employee relations, organizational climate and the EAP. Will the organizational climate be affected when individuals are forced to submit to a drug testing policy, that many believe violates their civil rights? Will the drug testing policies affect the image, effectiveness or role of the EAP? Will the tests add a dimension to the EAP which discourages employees from participating and labels EAP professionals as adversaries rather than advocates?

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify the attitudes of EAP professionals concerning employee drug testing and the subsequent organizational changes they anticipate from such a policy.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To survey EAP professionals to determine their perceived attitudes concerning employee drug testing.

2. To survey EAP professionals to determine their opinions about the subsequent organizational changes which might result from the implementation of an employee drug testing policy.
3. To analyze data and determine the prevalent attitudes of EAP professionals and identify correlations concerning employee drug testing and the various organizational changes which may occur.

Limitations Of The Study

The study was limited to the opinion and attitudes of a distinct group of EAP professionals, those belonging to the Mid-America Chapter of the Association of Labor/Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism.

The survey was pre-tested by the local Association of Labor/Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism Chapter.

Definitions

Employee Assistance Program referred to "structured programs that utilize technical, administrative, professional human services and personnel people to meet the needs of troubled employees". (Myers, 1984, p. 4)

Employee Drug Testing referred to a policy within an organization outlining procedures requiring job applicants and/or employees to submit to blood or urinalysis laboratory testing to detect the use of illicit drugs or alcohol.

Substance Abuse referred to the use of "a substance resulting in self-injurious behaviour or in the person's inability to limit his or her use of the substance".

(Coleman, Butcher and Carson, 1984, p. 397)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A History Of Employee Counseling

Employee counseling has been a part of major companies since the early 1920's. Counseling programs have gradually developed into more sophisticated, comprehensive programs as problems in the workplace became more apparent and as companies made a true commitment to helping the employee.

One of the earliest efforts by an employer to provide counseling assistance on the job was in 1919 when Metropolitan Life hired a "housemother" to counsel employees. In the 1920's it was believed at Western Electric that productivity and morale would improve if employees were given assistance on the job. (Dunkin, 1982) Western Electric's "personnel counseling" helped employees with a variety of problems including strained relationships, job dissatisfaction and alcoholism. Their endeavor was a "pioneering effort in worker development". (Dickson and Roethlisberger, 1966, p. 71)

Programs designed specifically to help the working alcoholic, sometimes called Employee Alcohol Programs, date back to 1942 with the first program implemented by E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. Eastman Kodak, Armco Steel

and Consolidated Edison of New York also began offering programs to provide treatment for the alcoholic as an alternative to employment termination. (Dunkin, 1982)

Programs were slow to develop across the country until the federal government began programs to help workers and military personnel. The government's later development of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) helped promote the establishment of EAP's in American industry during the 1970's. (Shain and Grownveld, 1980) The number of EAP's drastically increased from fifty in 1950 to over five thousand in 1984. (Myers, 1984) This dramatic increase reflects the continued commitment of American business to salvage troubled employees and attempt to increase their productivity.

A Definition Of Employee Assistance Programs

Employee assistance constitutes a wide variety of services and programs to meet the needs of the employees as well as the employer. Employee Assistance Programs can be defined as "structured programs that utilize technical, administrative, professional human services and personnel people to meet the needs of troubled employees". (Myers, 1984, p. 4) This definition suggests that a successful EAP will incorporate the services of many. The EAP professional, company supervisors and administrators are all vitally important in identifying the troubled employee.

The EAP may be an integral part of the internal personnel department which may operate and coordinate the services. Counseling and guidance may be provided by the EAP professional or professional human service contracts.

EAP may also refer to the "policies and procedures adopted by an employer in order to identify employees, including those with alcoholic involvement, as manifested by deteriorating job performance". (Shain and Grownveld, 1980, p. 1) This definition suggests that an employee's problems are of no concern to the employer, unless they begin affecting the employee's productivity and value to the organization. Indeed, within an organization there are "two basic motivations for employer assistance; humanitarian and economic". (Myers, 1984, p. 4) The EAP can help reduce insurance, disability and sick leave costs as well as increase productivity, which are all important factors in business and industry.

From this standpoint, Wrich (1982, p. 20) identifies the "successful employee assistance program as an identification process, not a treatment program". For many companies, treatment becomes the responsibility of outside sources such as community mental health centers and hospitals. For EAP efforts to be effective, it is essential for management to recognize the troubled employee at the early stage of a given crisis and refer them to appropriate resources. Once identified, the employee may be helped and in return help the organization by returning

to a more productive state.

The identification process may be long and tedious. EAP's are servicing a broad range of individuals who are experiencing various problems which may be manifested in a number of behaviors. There are over five thousand EAP's assisting the ten percent of all employees who are alcoholic, the six million compulsive gamblers and the half-million individuals who filed personal bankruptcy in 1981. It is believed that twenty percent of the employees in the United States have job-related difficulties, which leads to high costs to the company in theft, sabotage, accidents and disability benefits. (Myers, 1984)

One study of EAP's among the American Society of Personnel Administrators (ASPA) identify the most prevalent problems that cause employees to seek assistance at the workplace. Alcohol rehabilitation was the most frequently used service. Marital and family counseling and drug abuse problems were identified as the other most common situations addressed by the EAP. (Ford and McLaughlin, p. 34)

Employee Assistance Program Models

Due to the diversity of the clientele utilizing the EAP and the multiplicity of American businesses, there are a variety of EAP models in operation today. For the purpose of this study, an EAP model is the "structure that an organization uses to plan, implement and serve the needs of the troubled employees". (Myers, 1984, p. 69) There

are two basic structures or models of EAPs which are prevalent today. Most EAPs are divided into two categories depending on whether they are internal or external programs. (Myers, 1984)

Internal models refer to those programs located on company premises and staffed by company hired employees. The internal EAP may have professional staff responsible for employee intake, but refer the troubled employee to community counseling services for diagnosis and treatment. Many internal EAPs are responsible for total servicing. Staff may include an in-house psychologist who provides counseling, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up. (Ramsey, 1985)

The external EAPs may take two forms. A company may utilize a hot-line service which enables employees to call a service and talk to a counselor via telephone for assistance and referral to community resources. Many companies, including Capital Cities/ABC and Xerox have established nationwide hotlines with toll-free numbers. The service offers a guarantee of privacy to employees who are "reluctant to approach their bosses or medical departments. Once the drug user is on the phone, the hot-line counselor can encourage him to get help through an EAP or local clinical program". (Castro, 1986, p. 57)

The most common external model is the consultant EAP, in which an organization specializing in supplying counseling services, contracts with a company to provide

the EAP off company premises for a fee. The consultant provides counseling, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up in a non-threatening environment. It is within this model that many believe the interests of the employee may be more objectively viewed, in light of the needs of the employer. (Ramsey, 1985) Some advantages of contracting may include guaranteed confidentiality, more qualified counseling and reduced pressure from the company. (Harvard Business Review, 1981)

Regardless of the model selected and eventually implemented, there are specific objectives of any EAP. To resolve the employee's problem, the EAP professional (both internal and external) must make an accurate assessment of the employee's needs, make appropriate referrals, give adequate treatment and outline a plan for regular follow-up. (Ramsey, 1985)

A successful EAP is more than the identification and treatment process. An EAP must be utilized by the employees and have successful results. Within the organization, it is vital that employees realize the company's strong commitment to providing these services. Employees must understand the operation of the EAP and be assured of confidentiality when participating. Supervisory training is essential to standardize the procedures to follow with a troubled employee. Ideally, all those involved in the process must internalize the importance of the program, support the EAP efforts and understand its benefit to the

organization at large. (Ramsey, 1985)

Substance Abuse In The Workplace

Substance abuse is widespread within American society. It represents "the disorders of self-control and generally involves a pathological use of a substance resulting in self-injurious behavior or in the person's inability to limit his or her use of a substance". Substance abuse also "usually involves an impairment in work or social relations". (Coleman, Butcher and Carson, 1984, p. 397) The term substance abuse commonly refers to the use of alcohol and illegal drugs and the misuse of prescribed medication.

Substance abuse is so prevalent in our society that no one is totally immune to its effects. Impaired assembly line workers are building planes, trains, busses and cars while management assures the American public the vehicles are meeting required safety standards. Meanwhile, intoxicated pilots, air traffic controllers, railroad engineers, bus drivers and taxi drivers take innocent lives into their distorted control on a daily basis. Substance abuse is in the boardroom of some of the largest corporations and on the assembly line of American automobile manufacturers. Many companies have been unaware of the epidemic proportions of illegal drug usage among the employed. (Castro, 1986) "Use takes the form of alcohol-laden lunches, quick "joints" at break or lines of cocaine users in the parking lot, needing something extra

to make it through overtime". (Burmaster, 1985, p. 39)

"Drug use at work affects perception, eye-hand coordination and judgment. Injuries to the user and his fellow workers, damage to equipment and the production of defective products are a common result. Loss of creativity, memory and decision making capability can be costly to an enterprise and jeopardize the employment security of every employee". (Burmaster, 1985, p. 39)

Consequently, many companies are also becoming market-places for illegal drug dealing. Drug dealing employees cater to a large in-house clientele that is eager to buy in such a convenient environment. "In many offices, drugs are as easy to obtain as paper clips from the stock room. Some dealers provide messenger services to deliver cocaine and marijuana right to their customer's desks. In other cases, users send unwitting company messengers on "business" errands to pick up packages that actually contain narcotics". (Castro, 1986, p. 54)

Substance abuse and its affects on organizational productivity are becoming increasingly evident. Federal experts estimate that of all United States workers, ten to twenty-three percent use dangerous drugs on the job. "Persons who take drugs regularly, some twenty-five percent of the population, are likely to use them at work or at least sometimes be on a high when they arrive at the workplace". (Castro, 1986, p. 52) Other estimates state that "twenty-seven to forty-five percent of the employed

population is using illegal drugs to get through the day". (Burmester, 1985, p. 39)

The cost of substance abuse to American industry is devastating. It is "sapping the energy, honesty and reliability of the American labor force even as competition from foreign companies is growing even tougher". (Castro, 1986, p. 52) Estimates are that substance abuse costs the United States billions of dollars in lost production. Thirty billion dollars can be attributed to the alcoholic employee and eight billion dollars to the drug abuser, according to the Employee Assistance Society of North America. (Pearson, 1986)

In light of these statistics and figures it is surprising that these individuals continue to remain employed. According to Follman (1976, p. 223) half of all alcoholics are employed and generally comprise the twenty-five to fifty-five year old age bracket. They have been with the same employer for approximately ten to twelve years. Many have "worked productively for many years before alcoholism impaired their ability and undermined their dependability". (Bornstein, 1984, p. 23) Follman states that the drug abusers are usually twenty to twenty-five years old. Three-fourths of these employees have been with a company less than four years. "Many companies have been slow to respond to their growing drug dilemmas. They did not realize how widespread the abuse was and had no idea how to combat it". (Castro, 1986, p. 55)

Many employees maintain their positions with their employers because of the nature of substance abuse itself. The diseases of alcoholism and dependency consist of stages that often constitute years before a user is reduced to the classical non-functioning skidrow drunk or addict. (Follman, 1976) At the workplace, signs of drug use are often overlooked or misinterpreted. Absenteeism, mood fluctuations and lethargy are attributed to other problems. The pattern of substance abuse often begins with absenteeism and low productivity. If the abuse continues, an injury on the job is likely to occur. (Pearson, 1986) An EAP professional may be able to help management identify the substance abusers, however, these efforts may be thwarted if management is among the ranks of the substance abusers.

Employers Response To Substance Abuse

An increasing number of employers do not believe substance abuse and its subsequent effect on job performance is a private matter. Many are making drug surveillance a primary company concern. Probably the most publicized example of this developing attitude is in the field of professional sports. Athletes are submitting to urinalysis tests, undergoing treatment and donating percentages of their income to drug treatment facilities to stay on the team. "Hundreds of companies are setting up programs to combat drugs, providing psychiatric counseling for

employees, resorting to urinalysis to identify users and, in a few cases, going to far as to install hidden video cameras or hire undercover agents". (Castro, 1986, p. 52)

"For years, employers have had some clause in their personnel policy manuals ruling out use or possession of drugs and alcohol on company property. However, policy statements often had no teeth and no mechanism to identify users. The policies, to the frustration of safety and security directors, were mere window dressings." (Burmester, 1985, p. 39) Many employers are currently developing comprehensive drug and alcohol policies and requiring current employees and prospective employees to sign agreements. One such employer, Storer Communications, has a policy for acceptable behavior on and off company premises. All employees must sign that they are aware of the policy and that using or dealing drugs on or off company premises is cause for dismissal. The employees must also sign that they have not violated this policy since its effective date and agree to submit to blood or urinalysis testing. (Ideas and Trends in Personnel, 1986)

Exxon, IBM, Lockheed, United Airlines, Federal Express and TWA have implemented urinalysis testing on all job applicants. Drug sniffing dogs have been used by Pennzoil, Exxon and Mobil on their offshore oil platforms. Some companies are hiring undercover agents to work with local police to arrest drug dealing employees on company premises. (Castro, 1986)

Employees are voicing concerns that these types of tactics are a direct violation of their constitutional rights. (Collins, 1986) Employers, however, maintain they can implement and enforce policies and procedures on their private property. They further maintain that when an employee is hired, the employee agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the company. Since drug and alcohol use can cause accidents at the workplace and the manufacturing of unsafe products, some "executives argue that individual rights must be subordinated to the broader welfare of fellow employees and customers". (Castro, 1986, p. 58)

In view of the financial and safety implications, employers seem justified in attempting to rid their workforce of substance abuse. The issue of drug testing is controversial and raises many important issues. Employees are concerned about confidentiality and inaccurate results or samples which are mislabeled. Many are pre-occupied with the issues of self-incrimination and their due process rights. Some employees maintain that if they use drugs off company time, it does not necessarily mean they are jeopardizing safety standards or productivity. Equally important are their concerns about how the results will be used and many are afraid of unfair accusations. (Collins, 1986)

The implementation of drug testing is a relatively new idea with unknown consequences. These consequences have

the potential to affect the organizational climate and employee relations in either a positive or negative manner. Organizational research could yield valuable information to employers on the issue of drug testing. Research and reliable data can help employers determine if enforcing a drug-free work environment actually increases productivity and reduces costs. It can also help employers evaluate whether these benefits outweigh any possible organizational climate or employee relation changes which may result from implementing drug testing.

Summary

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) were developed to help the employee with a number of personal problems. Even the first EAPs recognized that some employee problems were substance related. Many companies specifically developed Employee Alcohol Programs as this problem became more evident in the workplace. Employee assistance became a sophisticated approach to a broad range of employee concerns.

With the continued rise in substance abuse, the EAP professionals service a large clientele of substance abusers. These clients are given an opportunity to voluntarily seek assistance before their job performance is negatively affected, but many wait until their supervisor notices performance problems and they are referred to the EAP. Often, the signs of substance abuse are overlooked and misinterpreted. Meanwhile, the costs in decreased

productivity and shoddy workmanship are detrimental to the employer.

With the advent of employee drug testing, employers are able to monitor and verify substance abuse on the job. These policies are meeting resistance from employees, but employers are developing comprehensive policies in an effort to rid their work environments from the dangers of substance abuse. Because drug testing is a relatively new issue, there are many unknown consequences of implementing and enforcing drug policies within organizations.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The Population

In order to explore the perceived attitudes of the Employee Assistance Program professionals concerning employee drug testing and its effects on organizations, it was first necessary to identify the population. This was determined by interviewing a number of professional individuals and trying to isolate a particular group knowledgeable in the field of employee assistance. The population was determined by securing a mailing list of the Mid-America Chapter of the Association of Labor/Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism (ALMACA). The list consists of 132 professional individuals who work within the field of employee assistance. These individuals work primarily in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. A few are employed in Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and New York. It was determined that all 132 persons would be a part of the study.

The Instrument

After identifying the issues of employee drug testing, a questionnaire was developed containing thirty-six

questions. A panel of six experts from various industries within the field of employee assistance were separately interviewed. During these personal interviews, the experts discussed the issues of drug testing and assisted with the content development of the instrument. Demographic questions focused on each participant's involvement within employee assistance, the structure of the EAP and current organizational policies on drug testing. Other questions asked the EAP professionals to give their personal attitudes and opinions about developing and implementing employee drug testing policies within organizations. Questions addressed possible anticipated changes in employee relations, organizational climate and the EAP which might occur as a result of implementing a drug testing policy.

The questionnaire was pre-tested by a local group of ALMACA members. Copies of the questionnaire were given to an ALMACA member who took them to a monthly meeting and made them available to interested members. Eleven individuals responded to the request to review and revise the instrument and changes were made after reviewing their recommendations. Most suggestions focused on simplifying or clarifying the questions and instructions.

One hundred and thirty-two questionnaires were mailed with instructions on completing and returning the instrument. A cover letter explaining the questionnaire and the nature of the study was included. Fifty-three

individuals responded to the questionnaire and one responded at a date too late to include in the study. Three questionnaires were returned with the address unknown. This represents a usable response rate of 40.2 percent. The five page questionnaire was lengthy, complex and required approximately twenty minutes to complete. In light of these factors, the author was satisfied with the response rate.

Due to the controversial nature of drug testing, the author believed it was essential to ensure the confidentiality of each respondent. It was believed the respondents would be more candid in their responses if they were free from revealing their own identity and that of their organization. Consequently, there was only one mailing of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The intent of the study was to provide descriptive information and identify the prevalent attitudes of EAP professionals on the issue of employee drug testing. A further intent was to reveal possible relationships between these attitudes and the EAP professional's experience, role and organizational type. Also, it was hoped that information could be generated which would indicate if employee drug testing would have positive or negative impact on an organization.

In order to accomplish this, it was determined that

frequency counts, percentages and the Chi Square would be the most effective statistical tools to be utilized. The data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The subprograms Frequencies, Condescriptive and Cross Tabulations were identified as the programs which would best interpret the descriptive data. (Nie, et al, 1975) All calculations were completed by the Tulsa Junior College Computer Center.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Limitations Of The Instrument

Of the one hundred thirty-two mailed questionnaires, fifty-three were returned answered and three were returned address unknown. The data generated by the completed questionnaire can be grouped into two general categories: that relating to the organization and its policies where Employee Assistance Program professionals are employed or affiliated and the individual opinions of the EAP professionals based on their own personal knowledge and experience in the workplace.

The questionnaire had 18 demographic items and 18 perception items. The demographic items addressed experience, professional roles, organizational type, EAP model, program types, organizational drug testing policies and union information. The perception items addressed the issues of drug testing and the perceived organizational impact of the testing.

It should be noted that most of the respondents gave multiple answers on both types of questions, even when not instructed to do so and this affected the interpretation of the data. Demographic questions with multiple answers

could not be counted. Therefore, there were fewer responses than would normally be anticipated. In regards to the perception items, it was necessary to treat each potential response as individual factors to allow for the multiple responses made by the respondents. Therefore, the total percentages for most questions will total more than one hundred. The Chi-Square was used to analyze the data. However, the analysis of this information was adversely affected by the multiplicity of responses and the small population. Although isolated correlations were statistically significant, they had no real meaning in a context of application and were, therefore, excluded from this study.

Results

The demographic data revealed that of those participating in the study, the average length of experience in the field of employee assistance was 6.83 years. Tables I, II, III and IV describe the participating respondents and their programs. The largest number of respondents, some 35.8 percent identified themselves as EAP administrators who were employed or affiliated with a variety of business types and industries such as oil and gas, banking and insurance. Most of the respondents, 43.4 percent worked within an in-house assessment and referral EAP and 22.8 percent were involved as contract consultant providers. The scope of the EAPs were overwhelmingly

comprehensive programs (broadbrush, 73.6 percent).

TABLE I
PROFESSIONAL ROLES OF RESPONDENTS

	Percent
EAP administrator	35.8
Provider of support services	9.4
Labor representative	9.4
Consultant	7.5
EAP counselor (in-house)	5.7
Other	3.8
Management representative	1.9

TABLE II
TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH
RESPONDENTS ARE EMPLOYED

	Percent
Manufacturing	18.9
Health care	9.4
Utilities	7.5
Sales	1.9
Other	39.6

TABLE III
TYPE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
REPORTED IN USE BY RESPONDENTS

	Percent
In-house assessment and referral only	43.4
Contract consultant/provider	22.6
In-house total service	17.0
Other	3.8

TABLE IV
SCOPE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

	Percent
Broadbrush (comprehensive)	73.6
Substance abuse and mental health	13.2
Substance abuse	5.7
Alcoholism only	0

The data received on two survey items requesting numbered estimates concerning the numbers of individuals to whom the respondents provided services, was not sufficiently complete to warrant inclusion in this study.

Table V describes the union status of the organizations. On the status of unions, 30.2 percent of the organizations in which the EAP professionals were employed or affiliated were non-union. Of the 30.2 percent unionized companies (those identified as unionized and highly structured union) 87.5 percent did not have an established drug testing policy. However, 66 percent of all the organizations (union and non-union) had a policy which addressed the chemically dependent employee.

TABLE V
UNION STATUS OF ORGANIZATIONS
REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

	Percent
Non-union	30.2
Organizing a union	0
Unionized	17.0
Highly structured union	13.2
Other	7.5

Table VI illustrates the current drug testing policies of the organizations. On the issue of employee drug testing, according to the respondents, 73.6 percent of the organizations did not conduct random drug testing and 52.8 percent did not have a "for cause" drug testing policy. However, 26.4 percent of the organizations without drug testing policies were considering implementing one.

TABLE VI
CURRENT DRUG TESTING POLICIES OF
ORGANIZATIONS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

	Percent
Established union policy on drug testing	12.5
Chemically dependent employee policy	66.0
Random drug testing policy	15.1
For-Cause drug testing policy	34.0
Considering drug testing policy	26.4

Respondents involved with organizations that currently had random or for-cause drug testing policies, or were considering implementing such policies, stated that these organizations were implementing drug testing policies to

increase productivity, increase job safety and to discourage drug use. Of these respondents, 77.7 percent felt that drug testing could effectively achieve these organizational goals.

Table VII compares the reasons for implementing drug testing policies. Whereas the respondents stated the organization's were implementing drug testing primarily as a viable means of increasing productivity, 64.2 percent of the respondents believed increased job safety first and foremost justified the implementation of a drug testing policy, followed by reducing drug use and increasing productivity.

TABLE VII
REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTING DRUG TESTING

Reasons	Percent Stated Publicly By The Organization	Percentage As Perceived By EAP Professionals
Increase productivity	64.2	41.5
Increase job safety	47.2	64.2
Discourage drug use	43.4	45.3
Reduce insurance costs	20.8	35.8
Other	7.5	5.7

Other questions which focused on organizations with current drug testing policies or those considering such action revealed that the current organizational response to an employee's positive drug test was referral to the EAP for evaluation. Within those organizations, EAP personnel had been included in the development of the employee drug testing policy, according to 75.9 percent of the respondents.

The majority, 67.9 percent, of all the respondents surveyed, were in favor of implementing drug testing policies and 75.5 percent stated they would personally comply with a request to submit to drug testing.

Table VIII describes the action the respondents believe should be taken when an employee tests positive. Most respondents felt that the employee should be referred to the EAP for evaluation and the second most popular action was to conduct a re-test. Both of these actions were suggested for employees who tested positive with or without documented evidence of a job performance problem.

TABLE VIII
SUGGESTED ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON POSITIVE RESULTS

Action	Percent Without Evidence Of Job Performance Problem	Percent With Evidence Of Job Performance Problem
Referral to EAP	60.4	73.6
Re-test	35.8	17.0
Nothing	17.0	0.0
Other	5.7	9.4
Suspension	3.8	9.4
Mandatory treatment	1.9	18.9
Dismissal	0	1.9

Table IX lists the responses concerning test participants. Thirty-four percent of the respondents thought all employees should be required to participate in drug screening on a random basis, while 24.5 percent equally stated job applicants and persons involved in accidents where use was suspected should participate.

TABLE IX
SUGGESTED DRUG TESTING PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Percent
All employees on a random basis	34.0
Job applicants only	24.5
Persons involved in accidents where use is suspected	24.5
All employees on a scheduled basis	18.9
Poor job performers only	15.1
Persons involved in accidents	17.0
All employees where use is suspected	7.5
Only specific job positions	7.5

In reference to the effect of drug testing on organizational climate, Table X illustrates that 37.7 percent of the respondents believed drug testing would cause major problems initially within the organization but 30.2 percent believed there would be employee support for the organization's concern for safety.

TABLE X
EFFECTS OF DRUG TESTING ON ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

Effect	Percent
Major problems initially	37.7
Employee support for organization's concern for safety	30.2
Little effect	20.8
Development of "big brother" atmosphere	20.8
Other	13.2
None	5.7

On the issue of the effect of drug testing on employee morale, Table XI shows that 30.2 percent stated drug testing would increase morale. Thirty-four percent predicted a decrease in morale with the implementation of drug testing.

TABLE XI
EFFECTS OF DRUG TESTING ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

Effect	Percent
Increase employee morale	30.2
Decrease employee morale	34.0
No effect on employee morale	20.8

Table XII describes the effects of drug testing on the EAP. Of those responding, 52.8 percent stated they felt drug testing would affect the effectiveness of the EAP. Less than one-fourth of those responding qualified this answer by stating why. Of those who did respond, increased visibility, increased referrals and increased awareness were said to have a potential impact on EAP effectiveness. Most respondents, 58.5 percent, did not believe their role would be altered with drug testing. Most importantly, 60.4 percent said they did not believe their image would change in the minds of the employees from an advocate of the employee to an adversary with the onset of drug testing.

TABLE XII
EFFECTS OF DRUG TESTING ON THE
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Effect	Percent	
	Agree	Disagree
Drug testing will affect EAP effectiveness	52.8	34.0
Drug testing will alter role of EAP professional	34.0	58.5
Drug testing will change advocate image of EAP professionals to adversary	28.3	60.4

Table XIII describes some basic perceptions of the respondents concerning drug testing. It should be noted that the language of two questions was changed in the table to make all the statements positive. The majority of those surveyed believed drug testing was good for the organization, its employees and public relations. They also believed drug testing was necessary and that the cost of the testing was worth the return. They did not believe drug testing was a violation of human rights. Only 39.6 percent of those surveyed believed there were viable alternatives to drug testing. Of those who mentioned alternatives, education and effective EAPs were mentioned most frequently.

TABLE XIII
EAP PROFESSIONAL'S PERCEPTIONS OF DRUG TESTING

	Agree	Percent Disagree	Uncertain
Drug testing is good for the organization	60.4	20.8	15.1
Drug testing is good for the employees	58.5	20.8	17.0
Drug testing is a violation of human rights	9.4	54.7	30.2
Drug testing is necessary	47.2	17.0	32.1
The cost of drug testing is worth the return	56.6	17.0	22.6
Drug testing is good company relations	43.4	20.8	32.1

Table XIV and Table XV list the potential problems and benefits of drug testing. When asked to identify the potential problems of drug testing, those surveyed mentioned legal challenges, unfair accusations and inaccurate results most often. Education and well-defined policy were identified as possible means of minimizing these potential problems. Early identification of

substance abusers, increased safety and higher productivity were the most frequently mentioned benefits of drug testing.

TABLE XIV
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OF DRUG TESTING

Problem	Percent
Legal challenges	73.6
Unfair accusations	60.4
Inaccurate results	54.7
Invasion of privacy for off duty conduct	49.1
Changes in employee morale and attitude	47.2
Mislabeled samples	43.4
Abuse of power	41.5
Harassment by supervisors	37.7
Other	15.1
Decrease in public image of the organization	11.3

TABLE XV
BENEFITS OF DRUG TESTING

Benefits	Percent
Early identification of substance abusers	73.6
Increased safety	69.8
Higher productivity	54.7
Enhancement of aftercare plans	50.9
None	9.4
Other	5.7

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to determine the attitude of a group of helping professionals, those involved in employee assistance, concerning the issue of employee drug testing. It was also an effort to identify those organizational elements which might be positively or negatively affected by the implementation of drug testing, namely, climate, employee relations and morale.

A questionnaire was developed which would identify the prevalent attitudes concerning drug testing and the possible organizational impact. In summation, the reasons given by the stated organizational policies and the Employee Assistance Program professionals themselves on implementing drug testing included increasing productivity, job safety and decreasing drug use, although in different sequence. Both identified referral to the EAP as the course of action to take for those testing positive.

Survey respondents were in favor of drug testing and believed it could achieve stated organizational goals. On the issue of organizational impact, respondents were divided on the effect drug testing would have on the

organizational climate overall. Similarly, opinions on the effect on employee morale were split. Respondents believed employee participation in EAPs would increase, but their roles would not be altered or their image negatively affected in the minds of the employees with the onset of drug testing.

Overall, drug testing was viewed in a positive manner with most respondents believing it was good for all concerned and it was necessary today. Availability of education programs and effective EAPs were mentioned as possible alternatives to drug testing by those who believed there were viable alternatives.

The respondents identified the potential problems and benefits of drug testing. Problems included legal challenges, unfair accusations and inaccurate results. The benefits included early identification of substance abusers, increased safety and higher productivity.

Conclusions

The overall favorable responses toward the issues of drug testing by the respondents possibly indicates another necessary progression of employee assistance. During the last few decades, the EAPs have become more sophisticated as they continue to encounter the increasing problems of alcohol and drug abuse. Counseling, confidentiality and program availability are not solving the drug and alcohol problems in the workplace. Drug testing may be the only

solution to these problems. Data from this research suggests that employers and EAP professionals are reluctant to allow employees to continue behavior which decreases productivity and company profits and increases safety hazards in the workplace.

Employee assistance, although successful in identifying some troubled employees, encounters the obstacle of employee denial of the problem. Drug testing is an effective method of identifying substance abusers at an early stage. Employee assistance professionals recognize the potential problems of drug testing but apparently do not see viable alternatives. However, they do see the need for education, well-defined policies and comprehensive, effective EAPs. A slightly higher percentage of professionals foresee a negative impact to the organization with the onset of drug testing. Most predict a decrease in morale, but this percentage of respondents is only slightly higher than those who predict an increase in morale. Most of the professionals appear to believe they will continue to be seen as a helper and that drug testing will not change their image in the minds of the employee.

It is essential to look at this data from another viewpoint. Of the professionals who responded to this study, approximately one-half currently have drug testing policies and one-fourth are considering implementing policies. Of the unionized organizations, few had established drug testing policies in place. Therefore, the

opinions and attitudes of all the professionals is not based on direct experience with drug testing, but on what they anticipate will be the effects of drug testing. There is a possibility that these individuals may be unaware of the real consequences of drug testing or may be overly optimistic about drug testing.

Recommendations

There is a need for further research in this area. Presently, there is limited information addressing the organizational impact of drug testing. The majority of the information focuses on the techniques of drug testing and/or the impact on the individual. A relevant study might focus on organizations who have had drug testing programs over a period of time and the reactions of employers and/or employees to the policy and its effect on the organization.

Due to the limited research in this area, the researcher was unable to locate survey instruments of this nature. Consequently, several problem areas are apparent. The questionnaire had a valuable content, but the structure made the analysis extremely difficult. Questions should have been ranked or scaled for easier tabulation and analysis.

Many respondents checked more than one answer when not instructed to do so. This created some analysis problems and made it necessary to count all perception items.

responses as individual factors. Therefore, the percentages in most questions totals more than 100. Demographic items with multiple answers could not be tabulated. Therefore, there were fewer responses than would normally be anticipated. In the future, problems of this nature could be overcome by more explicit instructions or by restructuring the questionnaire.

Confidentiality of the respondents did not appear to be an issue, as many persons identified themselves. Therefore, it might be advantageous to have a telephone follow-up interview or a second mailing to increase the response rate.

Comments from respondents was encouraged in this study. One respondent stated that a definition of terms might have been helpful in responding to the study. On a similar note, another respondent stated that the questions referring to drug testing were general and did not allow for the different variables of drug testing to be expressed in the answers. For example, some respondents might answer a question differently depending on whether the respondent was referring to random, for-cause or pre-employment testing.

The correlation of data could also yield valuable insight. Due to the lack of specificity in the data instrument, respondents identified multiple primary roles and other demographic items in this study which precluded the statistical analysis originally planned for use in

this study. Although isolated correlations were statistically significant, they had no real meaning in a context of application and were, therefore, excluded from the report of findings. However, the researcher recognizes the importance of such data in future studies.

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APPENDIX



Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
CLASSROOM BUILDING, 406
(405) 624-6275

July 14, 1986

Dear ALMACA Member:

I am currently doing graduate research in Human Resource Development and need the informed judgment of professionals in the field of Employee Assistance. Through your membership with ALMACA you have been identified as a knowledgeable and active professional in this field.

The study you are being asked to participate in is designed to reveal the "Perceived Attitudes of Employee Assistance Professionals Concerning Employee Drug Testing and the Organizational Impact." Since this is a relatively new issue, many of the questions on the survey require that you give your personal opinions about the issue or what you anticipate may result in the future based on your knowledge and experience in the workplace. Some questions ask specifically for the organizational policy, but the majority of the questions focus on how you feel.

The questionnaire contains thirty-six questions and will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. So we may begin compiling this data, please return the completed questionnaire by August 1, 1986 in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope.

The findings of this study may be helpful to you or others who are working in this sensitive area. If you would like a brief summary of the findings, please complete the attached form and mail under separate cover to further assure your anonymity.

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to contribute to this study. We appreciate your participation and any comments you wish to make.

Sincerely,

Dory Wilson
Graduate Student

Dr. John L. Baird
Associate Professor

PART I. QUESTIONS CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE EXPERIENCE.

Directions: Please place an X on the line next to your response. Please remove the cover letter prior to mailing.

1. How long have you been involved in employee assistance? _____ years.
2. Which of the following best describes your role in employee assistance?
 - _____ consultant
 - _____ provider of support services (counselor, agency)
 - _____ EAP administrator
 - _____ EAP counselor (in-house)
 - _____ management representative
 - _____ labor representative
 - _____ other _____
3. What type(s) of organization(s) are you involved with?
 - _____ manufacturing
 - _____ sales
 - _____ retail sales
 - _____ utilities
 - _____ health care
 - _____ other _____
4. If you work within a structured EAP, which of the following best describes the type of program?
 - _____ in-house total service
 - _____ in-house assessment and referral only
 - _____ contract consultant/provider
 - _____ other _____
5. Which best describes the scope of employee assistance as you are involved with it?
 - _____ alcoholism only
 - _____ substance abuse
 - _____ broad brush
 - _____ substance abuse and mental health
 - _____ other _____
6. Please estimate the number of individuals you provide services to:
 - _____ within one organization (in-house)
 - _____ within _____ organizations (contractual)
7. How many individuals utilized the EAP services in 1985? _____ 1986? _____
8. Concerning unions, please describe the organization(s):
 - _____ non-union
 - _____ organizing a union
 - _____ unionized
 - _____ highly structured union
 - _____ other _____

PART II. QUESTIONS CONCERNING DRUG TESTING POLICIES.

9. If your organization is unionized, has the union established a policy on employee drug testing? yes no
10. Does the organization(s) have a written policy statement for handling the chemically dependent employee? yes no
If yes, briefly describe:
11. Does the organization(s) have an employee drug testing policy for employees on a random basis? yes no
12. Does the organization(s) have a "for cause" drug testing policy which is implemented during specific times only, such as following an accident or or viewing impairment on the job? yes no
13. If the answers to #11 or #12 is no, are they considering implementing such policies? yes no
If you answered NO to #11, #12 and #13, please skip to question #19.
14. If the answer to #11, #12 or #13 is yes, what reasons are being given by the organization for implementing drug testing? (check all that apply)
- to increase productivity/decrease lost time
 to increase job safety
 to discourage drug use
 to reduce employee turnover
 to reduce supervisory problems
 to reduce insurance costs
 other _____
15. Do you believe drug testing will effectively achieve the organization's desired goal(s) in question #14? yes no
Why?
16. What is the stated organizational philosophy toward employee drug testing?
- viewed as a means of ridding drug use in general
 viewed as an essential part of employee assistance
 viewed as a means to reduce costs of lost time/decreased productivity
 viewed as a means to increase job safety
 other _____
17. What is the proposed or current organizational response toward employees who test positive?
- immediate dismissal
 a stern warning and a second chance
 a disciplinary hearing and possible suspension
 referral to EAP
 referral to treatment
 other _____

18. Has the organization(s) included you or other EAP personnel in the process of developing the employee drug testing policy? _____ yes _____ no
19. Are you in favor of implementing drug testing policies? _____ yes _____ no
If so, in what manner?
20. What reasons do you believe justify the implementation of a drug testing policy?
- _____ to increase productivity
 - _____ to increase job safety
 - _____ to reduce insurance costs
 - _____ to reduce drug usage
 - _____ to improve company image
 - _____ don't agree with drug testing
 - _____ other _____
21. Suppose you were told you would be subject to drug testing. Would you comply with this request? _____ yes _____ no
22. What action do you believe should be taken with an employee who tests positive for drug use without documented evidence of a job performance problem?
- _____ re-test
 - _____ dismissal
 - _____ suspension
 - _____ referral to EAP for evaluation
 - _____ mandatory treatment
 - _____ nothing
 - _____ other _____
23. What action do you believe should be taken with an employee who tests positive with documented evidence of a job performance problem?
- _____ re-test
 - _____ dismissal
 - _____ suspension
 - _____ referral to EAP for evaluation
 - _____ mandatory treatment
 - _____ nothing
 - _____ other _____
24. Suppose a drug testing policy is implemented. In your opinion, who should be required to participate?
- _____ all employees on a scheduled basis
 - _____ all employees where use is suspected
 - _____ all employees on a random basis
 - _____ job applicants only
 - _____ poor job performers only
 - _____ persons involved in accidents
 - _____ persons involved in accidents where use is suspected
 - _____ only specific job positions

PART III. QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT OF DRUG TESTING.

25. What overall effect do you perceive in the organizational climate due to the implementation of a drug testing policy for active employees?
- little effect
 major problems initially (labor relations, etc)
 development of a "big brother" atmosphere
 employee support for the organization's concern for safety
 none
 other _____
26. What effect do you believe the drug testing will have on employee participation in EAPs?
- increase in voluntary decrease in voluntary
 increase in involuntary decrease in involuntary
27. Do you believe drug testing will affect the effectiveness of EAPs?
 yes no
 Why?
28. Do you believe your role will be altered with the implementation of drug testing? yes no
 If so, in what manner?
29. Do you believe your image will change in the minds of the employees from an advocate of the employee to an adversary with the onset of drug testing? yes no
30. In your opinion, will drug testing affect employee morale?
 increase morale decrease morale no effect
31. Please circle whether you agree (A), disagree (D) or are uncertain (UC) on the following statements:
- | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|
| Drug testing is good for the organization as a whole. | A | UC | D |
| Drug testing is good for the employees. | A | UC | D |
| Drug testing is a violation of human rights. | A | UC | D |
| Drug testing is necessary. | A | UC | D |
| The cost of drug testing is not worth the return. | A | UC | D |
| Drug testing is good company public relations. | A | UC | D |
32. Do you believe there are viable alternatives to drug testing? yes no
 If so, what are they?

33. What potential problems do you foresee with drug testing? (Please check all that apply).

- unfair accusations
- mislabeled samples
- abuse of power
- legal challenges
- inaccurate results
- invasion of privacy for off-duty conduct
- decrease in public image of the organization
- changes in employee morale and attitude
- harassment by supervisors
- other _____

34. How do you believe the potential problems may be minimized within an organization?

35. What benefits do you foresee with drug testing?

- increased safety
- early identification of substance abusers
- higher productivity
- enhancement of aftercare plans
- none
- other _____

36. Please make any other comments or identify any issues which may have been overlooked. Use the back of this page if necessary.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION !

VITA

Dorothy N. Wilson

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: PERCEIVED ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
PROFESSIONALS CONCERNING EMPLOYEE DRUG TESTING
AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

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Education: Graduated from Commonwealth High School, Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, 1974; received Bachelor of Arts from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1978; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University, December, 1986.

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