



Presenteeism at Work

Coming to work sick may do more harm than staying home – for the employee, the team, and the firm. Whilst the cost of absenteeism in organizations has been widely acknowledged and extensively examined, the counter-issue of ‘presenteeism’ has only recently attracted scholarly attention as a phenomenon that harms employee wellbeing, disrupts team dynamism, and damages productivity. This volume brings together leading international scholars from diverse scientific backgrounds, including occupational psychology, health, and medicine, to provide a pioneering review of the subject. International in scope, the collection incorporates both Western and East Asian perspectives, making it an informative resource for multinational companies seeking to formulate human resource strategies and better manage their culturally diverse workforce. It will also appeal to scholars and graduate students researching human resource management, organization studies, organizational health, and organizational psychology.

CARY L. COOPER is 50th Anniversary Professor of Organizational Psychology and Health at Manchester Business School. He is the author/editor of over 160 books, including the *Downsizing: Is Less Still More?* (Cambridge, 2012) and *Building More Effective Organizations* (Cambridge, 2007), as well as over 100 book chapters. He has written over 400 scholarly articles for academic journals, and is a frequent contributor to national newspapers, TV, and radio. He is currently Founding Editor of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* and Co-editor of the *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness*, and President of the British Academy of Management and the CIPD.

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Foreword

The *Cambridge Companions to Management* series is pleased to bring Cary Cooper and Luo Lu's path-breaking *Presenteeism at Work* to your attention. Presenteeism is the appearance of working but not working: something that is an increasing concern, not only for workers and their organizations, but for their societies. The combination of cost pressures from globalization and information technology means that more people than ever before do not have the luxury of staying away from work and resting when they become ill. For example, fully one out of every five jobs in the United States is held by a worker under contract – meaning no sick pay (National Public Radio/Marist poll). That means that every day not working results in no income for the worker on that day, so millions of people continue to work even when their health is impaired. This is heart-wrenching for those who must work under these circumstances, but it is also costly to organizations, which are not getting the work for which they are paying, and for societies, because it spreads disease and contributes to higher health care expenses as people push themselves and so become more gravely ill. Yet, presenteeism is not just a phenomenon of increased work insecurity. As Aronsson and Markland demonstrate in Chapter 6, presenteeism is a problem even in countries with extensive social supports for workers, such as Sweden. Further, as this volume demonstrates, there are cultural pressures as well: in Chapter 3, Lu and Kao report how the cultural pressures in Confucian societies foster presenteeism despite years of national and organizational policy interventions designed to limit it.

This is a book of both breadth and depth. Cooper and Lu have gathered scholars from a wide variety of disciplines and countries together to help us understand what the causes and consequences of presenteeism are. Scholars in medicine, psychology, economics, and business from Europe, Asia, and North America bring their diverse perspectives and understandings of the different contexts to enrich our understanding of presenteeism. For example, in Chapter 4, Ma,

Meltzer, Yang, and Liu document the work contexts, personal circumstances, personality traits, and motives leading to presenteeism. Chapter 8, by Miraglia and Johns, presents compelling evidence that presenteeism leads to emotional exhaustion, burnout, mental ill-health, physical ill-health, and job dissatisfaction. Further, this is the first work to move significantly beyond the study of presenteeism as an individual phenomenon with consequences for the individual and the organization to consider larger questions of team performance, organization strategy, and societal well-being.

This innovative, international, and cross-disciplinary perspective on a relatively new and increasingly important subject is a good example of why the Companions series exists. Enjoy.

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