

Roster Risk Assessment Tool Case Study



2

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING
WORKPLACES.



100+

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO
INTERACTED WITH THE ROSTER
RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL



9

NUMBER OF PROJECT PARTNERS



10

NUMBER OF LEADERS WHO
ENGAGED IN PROJECT



750

PROJECT REACH

PROJECT AIM

The project aimed to identify and quantify roster risk factors that place shift workers at a higher risk of fatigue and to create and trial a tool that would alert shift workers and their managers to shift rosters that may impact mental wellbeing.

THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

- Identify risk factors in shift work rosters that can increase fatigue in shift workers and to quantify these if possible.
- Create a Roster Risk Assessment Tool (RRAT) to quickly identify “risky rosters” that could cause fatigue for workers.
- Encourage and facilitate conversations between managers and shift workers to decrease risky rosters.
- Assess the efficacy of the RRAT for nurses at Central Gippsland Health (CGH) and Fulham Correctional Centre (FCC).
- Reduce the number of risks in rosters over the duration of the project and create positive changes in rostering behaviour.

OUR THIRTEEN RISKS

RISK NAME	DESCRIPTION
Excessive hours per fortnight	Rostered for more than 76 hours per fortnight
Insufficient days off per fortnight	Rostered for more than 10 days per fortnight
Insufficient rest break between shifts	Roster does not allow for at least 8 hours off between shifts
Insufficient rest break after night shift	Roster does not allow for at least 10 hours off between a night shift and the next shift
Insufficient rest break after long shift	Roster does not allow for at least 11.5 hours after a shift of 12 hours or more
Last shift before break is not early shift	Roster does not have day shift prior to 2 or more consecutive days off
First shift after break is not late shift	Roster does not have afternoon shift when returning from 2 or more consecutive days off
More than 6 consecutive shifts	Rostered for more than more than six consecutive days
Split Shifts	Rostered for more than one work block during a day
Single Days	Roster has days off either side of a single shift
More than 3 night shifts	Rostered on night shift for more than 3 consecutive days
Backward shift rotation	Roster sequence starts with nights and then moves to afternoon or day
No 2 day break after night duty	Roster does not allow at least 2 days off after last night shift

SUPPORTED BY



OUTCOMES

- The development and implementation of a Roster Risk Assessment Tool, which highlights roster risks that contribute to high job demand such as insufficient breaks between shifts, working excessive consecutive night shifts, and working excessive hours. This supports managers to be more aware of job demand and their role in rostering safer shift patterns.
- Increased awareness of roster risks, empowering staff to make informed health promoting choices about their rosters, For example, one shift worker reported that they no longer scheduled single days off, in order to have more effective rest periods in breaks between shifts.
- Increased awareness of managers regarding their role in decreasing roster risk.
- Increased awareness of the importance of open communication between managers and shift workers regarding self-rostering decisions and possible impacts upon mental wellbeing.
- The success of the RRAT can be seen in its intention to be adopted as a feature of the rostering systems at the project sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The project has demonstrated that the tool developed can promote positive behaviour change in rostering practices. However, more work can be done to strengthen the tool and increase its associated benefits.

Initially, a more in-depth data mining exercise would strengthen the tool's quantitative and qualitative analysis capacity. New variables including demographics, OHS reporting and tenure would all be useful additions.

Benefits could be increased through a greater focus on working with shift workers and managers to ensure their understanding of the tool, how it works and why it is in place.

There is a range of services and industries that could benefit from implementation and further development of the RRAT to increase awareness of roster risks, start conversations between staff and managers and promote mentally healthy shift work practices.

LEARNINGS

01. A significant strength of the RRAT was that it was an addition to existing roster systems, rather than being a whole new system. This enabled its integration into the workplace with limited disruption. Previously managers would have needed to refer to several different documents separate to their roster spreadsheet in order to apply different rostering guidelines.
02. It was identified, however, that a more comprehensive education program for staff around the use of the RRAT would be required in future implementations.
03. Qualitative analysis also indicated that use of the tool might be more widely accepted among early career nurses who are still learning about the rostering process. Later career nurses with established roster behaviours that work for them are likely to be more reluctant to change those behaviours.
04. A common theme among management staff was how arduous and time consuming the task of creating or approving rosters for a large team could be. The RRAT was useful because it provided a quicker and easier way to visualise risk than manually examining each individual's roster. It also provided a catalyst for conversations between shift workers and management about potential changes when risky rosters were identified.
05. Data mining of historical shift and leave records was unable to find meaningful direct correlations between the individual roster risk factors and sick leave taken. This is an area for further research and development.

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