

How do we evaluate the mental health measures  
in workplace sociologically?  
—focusing on support programs for reinstatement—

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Occupational mental health in Japan has been rapidly expanded since 2000. The Ministry of health, labor and welfare has centrally focused prevention and early detection of depression as suicide measures. The Ministry has announced a number of guidelines and amended the Industrial Safety and Health Act. Private enterprises have worked on mental health measures rapidly, too.

This would be a change called medicalization or psychiatrization of the industry and labor area. There are already some sociological researches. However, these have tended to discuss only from the point of view of the thesis of medicalization theory “personalization of social problem”. Then self-care recommended for workers is mainly focused. But, such studies cannot capture the changes that have occurred in the last 15 years fully.

Therefore, firstly, I describe the configuration and characteristics of the support programs for reinstatement which have been really important in many companies. Secondly, apart from the existing theorem, I re-examine the method to analyze the meanings of medicalization. Thirdly, I try to discuss the social functions of support programs for reinstatement from multiple points.