

Chapter 2

Preemployment Screening Practices

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Preemployment Screening Practices

As part of the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) survey, several questions were asked about various preemployment screening policies of companies.

CORPORATE POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT QUALIFICATIONS

There are normally minimum qualifications required of job applicants for positions within a company. At minimum, applicants must have the ability to perform the job for which they are being considered. Some of these job qualifications may be based on experience, some on training, and some on aptitude. Other employment qualifications may relate to possible costs or risks (e.g., loss, casualty, and liability) that the job applicant represents as an employee to the company. The OTA survey briefly explored corporate policy concerning an illustrative range of job applicant attributes that might affect employment eligibility.

Criminal Records

Fifty-two percent of corporate personnel officers surveyed reported that their companies had a policy concerning hiring persons with criminal records (table 2-1). Of those companies having such policies, over a third (37 percent) said their policies prohibited the hiring of applicants with criminal records while 8 percent said their policies did not. Fifty-four percent reported that individual circumstances played a role in such hiring decisions—there was neither a blanket acceptance nor rejection of applicants with criminal records (table 2-2).

Cigarette Smoking

Cigarette smoking is recognized as a behavior carrying significant risks for cancer, heart disease, and other negative health outcomes. Nonetheless, only 8 percent of corporate personnel officers reported that their companies had a policy concerning hiring cigarette smokers. Nearly a third (29 percent) of those companies with a policy said that it was against corporate policy to hire smokers, while 46 percent said that it was not. Nineteen

percent said the circumstance would dictate the hiring of smokers.

Preexisting Medical Conditions

Personnel officers in more than a third (35 percent) of the companies responding to the OTA survey reported that a corporate policy concerning hiring persons with preexisting medical conditions existed. The likelihood of a company establishing a policy concerning preexisting medical conditions varied little with firm size. Among companies with fewer than 5,000 employees, 37 percent had policies about hiring persons with preexisting conditions. An equivalent proportion (38 percent) of companies with 5,000 to 9,999 employees had such policies. A slightly smaller proportion (31 percent) of companies with 10,000 or more employees had policies concerning hiring persons with preexisting conditions.

Only 6 percent of companies that had a policy concerning employment of persons with preexisting conditions said hiring such applicants violated company policy. On the other hand, only 19 percent reported that it was not against policy to hire them. In the majority of cases (69 percent), when such a policy existed, the hiring of an individual with a preexisting condition may or may not have been against company policy—employment was presumably based on the nature of the condition.

Genetic Susceptibility

Only 5 percent of companies reported having a corporate policy concerning hiring persons with increased genetic susceptibility to substances or conditions in the workplace. Of those companies with a policy, 5 percent said their policies prohibited the hiring of people with an increased genetic susceptibility to substances or conditions in the workplace, while 13 percent said their policies did not. Twenty-two percent did not answer the question.

These four areas did not exhaust the range of employee characteristics that might be factored into an employment decision. However, they provided a simple illustration that large companies had identified a range of factors that could affect a job applicant's employment eligibility. All of these

Table 2-1-Corporate Policy Concerning Hiring of Employees

Q.12a. Does your company have a policy concerning hiring: cigarette smokers; persons with criminal records; persons with preexisting medical conditions; persons with increased genetic susceptibility to substances or conditions in the workplace?

(Base: Personnel officers)

	Unweighted Base	Have policy (in percent)			
		Yes	No	Don't know ^a	No answer
Cigarette smokers.....	(569)	8	91	0	1
Persons with criminal records.....	(569)	52	45	*	3
Persons with preexisting medical conditions.....	(569)	35	62		2
Persons with increased susceptibility to substances or conditions in workplace.....	(569)	5	91	*	4

^aVolunteered response.

*Indicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Table 2-2-Corporate Policy Concerning Hiring of Employees

Q.12b. Generally speaking, would you say it is against company policy to hire: cigarette smokers; persons with criminal records; persons with preexisting medical conditions; persons with increased genetic susceptibility to substances or conditions in the workplace?

(Base: Personnel officers in companies with hiring policies covering persons asked about)

	Unweighted base	Against policy to hire (in percent)			
		Yes	No	Depends	No answer
Cigarette smokers.....	(43)	29	46	19	7
Persons with criminal records.....	(269)	37	8	54	2
Persons with preexisting medical conditions.....	(21 1)	6	19	69	6
Persons with increased susceptibility to substances or conditions in workplace.....	(28)	5	13	60	22

^avolunteered response.

*Indicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

factors represented preexisting conditions (medical or genetic condition, criminal record, smoking) that may or may not bear on the applicant's ability to do the job. Few companies reported a straightforward policy of excluding persons with criminal records, who smoke cigarettes, or with preexisting medical or genetic conditions from eligibility for employment. Nonetheless, in at least some of these areas, a substantial proportion of large companies had employment policies that may have excluded such persons from some jobs or under certain conditions.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH QUALIFICATIONS

Although the survey did not test the proposition, it might be expected that most employers would require that a job applicant or employee be physically fit or able to perform a job, in order to be considered for the position. However, it is not easy to specify what "physically fit" or "able" means in a positive fashion. Therefore, the survey investi-

gated whether companies had established negative health criteria for employment.

The majority of health officers responding to the survey (69 percent) reported that there were no specific medical criteria, other than those mandated by regulation (e.g., chest x-rays for certain jobs), that excluded job applicants from specific jobs, sites, or positions in their companies. However, 27 percent of the health officers reported the existence of medical criteria that affected the employment eligibility of job applicants (table 2-3). The existence of medical criteria for employment was reported most frequently in the industry areas of electric utilities (65 percent), other chemicals (43 percent), and pharmaceuticals (40 percent).

Space was provided for health officers to write in which specific medical criteria excluded employment in which jobs. A variety of medical criteria was cited that excluded job applicants or employees from at least some jobs. In companies that reported medical criteria for at least some jobs, the conditions

Table 2-3-Employee Health Qualifications for Employment

Q.6. Are there any specific medical criteria, other than those mandated by regulation, that would exclude individuals from eligibility for certain positions, jobs, or sites in your company (e.g., hypersensitivity to dust or platinum, pregnancy)?

(Base: Health officers)

	Unweighed base	Have policy (in percent)		
		Yes	No	No answer
Total	(494)	27	69	4
<i>Type of business</i>				
Electrical utility	(39)	65	32	2
Pharmaceutical	(21)	40	58	1
Other chemical	(42)	43	56	2
Petroleum	(5)	38	62	0
Electronic	(19)	39		0
Other				
manufacturing	(154)	29	65	7
Nonmanufacturing	(214)	25	72	3

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

most often cited as excluding employment were back ailments or problems (29 percent) and visual acuity or sight impairment (14 percent) (table 2-4). Other frequently cited conditions that excluded applicants from some jobs included pregnancy (8 percent), diabetes (7 percent), hearing impairment or deafness (6 percent), and sensitivity to materials used in production (6 percent). Respiratory conditions, in general (6 percent), and asthma, in particular (2 percent), were also cited.

Other medical conditions that excluded employment in certain jobs were also reported by some health officers. These exclusionary conditions included: epilepsy (5 percent), heart conditions (5 percent), sensitivity to chemicals (4 percent), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)/human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection (4 percent), color blindness (3 percent), and renal diseases (1 percent). Drug use was also cited (4 percent) as a medical criterion that excluded employment in some jobs. The survey did not determine the consequences to an employee if one of these conditions developed after being hired.

A small number (9 percent) of the health officers reporting medical requirements for employment indicated that the criteria excluded the employee from all, most, or even a wide variety of jobs (table 2-5). The jobs most often excluded for persons that do not meet certain medical criteria were positions requiring heavy lifting or physical labor (20 percent). Other jobs excluded by medical criteria

Table 2-4-Medical Criteria for Employment

Q.6a. Which medical criteria would exclude employment (in which jobs)?

(Base: Health officers in companies that exclude individuals from certain positions)

Unweighed base	(178)
<i>Medical criteria</i>	
Back ailments/problems	29%
Visual impairment/problems with vision	14
Pregnancy	8
Diabetes	7
Hearing impairment/deafness	6
Respiratory problems/conditions	6
Sensitivity to production materials	6
Epilepsy/epileptic seizures	5
Heart/cardiac conditions/diseases	5
AIDS/HIV	4
Allergies/sensitivity to chemicals	4
Drug use/abuse	4
Medical conditions (unspecified)	4
Allergic reactions/sensitivity	3
Color blindness	3
Sensitivity to dust	3
Asthma	2
Medical conditions aggravated by work environment	1
Renal/kidney conditions/diseases	1
All other mentions	32
No answer	15

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Table 2-5-Jobs Excluded by Medical Criteria

Q.6b. In which jobs would employment be excluded by certain medical criteria?

(Base: Health officers in companies that exclude individuals from certain positions)

Unweighed base	(178)
<i>Jobs excluded</i>	
Jobs/positions requiring lifting/heavy lifting/physical labor	20%
Exposure to miscellaneous workplace elements	7
Jobs involving driving/vehicle/mobile operations	5
Exposure to chemicals/chemical toxins	5
Exposure to radiation/radioactive materials	4
Jobs involving heavy machinery/equipment operation	4
Jobs/positions requiring good vision/visual acuity	3
Jobs requiring respiratory protection	3
Jobs involving heights/climbing/high elevation	2
Exposure to lead/heavy metals	2
Exposure to materials harmful during pregnancy	1
Most/various/all positions	9
All other mentions	25
No answer	2

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

included those involving driving (5 percent), exposure to chemicals (5 percent), exposure to radiation (4 percent), heavy machinery (4 percent), and those requiring good vision (3 percent) and respiratory protection (3 percent).

Table 2-6—Medical Criteria for Employment Exclusion
Q.6a./Q.6b. What is the medical criteria? What position/job/site is excluded? (All mentions)

	Total	Back problem	Allergy	Visual impairment	Prannanay	respiratory problem	drug abuse	neural condition	Epilepsy	neurology impairment	Diabetes	MediCa. condition	A., other
Total		41	41	32	24	21	14	13	11	10	9	10	11
Jobs/positions requiring good vision/visual acuity	5	—	—	3	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—
Jobs/positions requiring lifting/heavy lifting physical labor	48	30	—	1	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
Jobs involving heavy machinery/equipment operation.....	7	2	4	2	—	1	—	—	3	—	2	—	3
Jobs involving driving/vehicle/mobile operations.....	25	—	1	10	—	—	2	1	5	2	3	1	—
Jobs requiring respiratory protection	13	—	—	—	—	7	—	4	1	—	1	—	—
Jobs involving heights/climbing/high elevation. Jobs with rotating swing/frequently changing shifts	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	1	—	6
Exposure to lead/heavy metals	5	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	4	—	—
Exposure to chemicals/chemical toxins	0	—	2	—	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Exposure to radiation/ radioactive materials ..	32	—	11	1	5	5	1	—	—	—	—	1	9
Exposure to materials harmful during pregnancy	11	—	—	—	3	1	—	1	—	—	1	—	5
Exposure to miscellaneous workplace elements ...	8	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Most/ various/all positions.	15	—	8	—	1	—	—	2	—	1	—	—	3
All other mentions	32	1	4	2	1	1	10	—	—	—	—	6	7
No answer	70	8	12	3	—	2	2	3	1	7	1	2	29
	11	1	2	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	4	1

NOTES: These are unweighted responses and not percentages. Allergy column head includes allergic reactions and sensitivity to dust, materials and chemicals; visual impairment includes visual blindness; Respiratory problems include asthma; All other column includes renal/kidney condition, AIDS, and no answer.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

It is interesting to examine a couple of examples in depth (table 2-6). Health officers were given three blank spaces to write in medical criteria that excluded employment in certain jobs. Of the 41 cases where back problems were cited as a reason for excluding people from jobs, 30 of them were for jobs requiring lifting, 2 were for jobs involving heavy machinery, 3 were for jobs involving heights, 1 was for exclusion for most, various, or all positions, and 8 were for other reasons. (This table presents data from all three mentions that health officers made.) Drug abuse was cited as a cause for job exclusion in 14 cases-2 involving driving, 1 exposure to chemicals, 10 for most, various, or all positions, and 2 for other reasons.

Preemployment Health Examinations

Medical examinations are often required of applicants for jobs in large corporations.¹ When asked whether preemployment health examinations are required of all, most, some, few, or no job applicants, about half of the health officers (49 percent) reported that preemployment health examinations were required of *all* job applicants. Moreover, the survey found 59 percent of respondents reported their companies required preemployment medical examinations of *all or most* job applicants (table 2-7).

The notion of required preemployment examinations was widely accepted as appropriate. Virtually all (94 percent) corporate personnel officers surveyed considered it appropriate to require preemployment health examinations of job applicants in workplace settings where there were known risks (table 2-8). However, the survey indicated that the existence of *known risk* was not primarily responsible for the acceptability of preemployment examinations. Even when *there were no known health risks*, two-thirds (67 percent) of corporate personnel directors considered preemployment health examinations of job applicants appropriate (table 2-9).

Appropriate Use of Preemployment Examinations

The OTA survey asked corporate health and personnel officers what their company policies were toward some of the possible purposes and uses of preemployment medical exams. Identical questions

Table 2-7-Corporate Requirements for Preemployment Health Examinations

Q.1. In your company, are preemployment health examinations required of all, most, some, few, or no job applicants?

(Base: Health officers)

Unweighed base	(494)
All job applicants	49%
Most job applicants	10
Some job applicants.	7
Few job applicants	4
None	28
No answer	2

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Table 2-8-Views on Preemployment Health Exams When There Are Known Health Risks

Q.2. Do you think it is generally appropriate or generally inappropriate for a company to require preemployment health examinations of job applicants in workplace settings where *there are known health risks*?

(Base: Personnel officers)

Unweighed base	(569)
Appropriate.	94%
Inappropriate	5
No answer	1

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Table 2-9-Views on Preemployment Health Exams When There Are No Known Health Risks

Q.1. Do you think it is generally appropriate or generally inappropriate for a company to require preemployment health examinations of job applicants in workplace settings where *there are no known health risks*?

(Base: Personnel officers)

Unweighed base	(569)
Appropriate.	67%
Inappropriate	32
Don't know*	•
No answer	1

*Volunteered response.

*Indicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

were put to both corporate health officers and personnel officers to see whether their different roles might produce different norms concerning company policies on the uses of medical information collected from job applicants.

¹The OTA survey was conducted prior to enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Public Law 101-336). Beginning in July 1992, ADA bars preemployment medical examinations unless they are job-related and consistent with business necessity. Examining the ADA's effect on the practices uncovered by this survey is beyond the scope of this background paper.

Table 2-10-Views on Preemployment Health Exams To Identify Applicants Who Represent Risks

Q.2. Would your company consider it acceptable or unacceptable to conduct a preemployment health examination in order to identify job applicants?

(Base: Health officers/personnel officers)

		Percent				
	Unweighed base	Acceptable	Un- acceptable	Depends ^a	Don't know	No answer
Who are physically unfit for employment:						
Health officers	(400)	92	3	0	0	5
Personnel officers	(542)	89	10	0	0	0
Who are emotionally or psychologically unstable:						
Health officers	(400)	77	14	•	1	9
Personnel officers	(542)	73	23	0	1	3
Who are currently using drugs:						
Health officers	(400)	86	7	0	•	7
Personnel officers	(542)	89	9	0	1	2
Who are at increased risk to workplace hazards:						
Health officers	(400)	85	8	0	•	7
Personnel officers	(542)	84	13	0	0	3
With genetic susceptibility to workplace exposures:						
Health officers	(400)	51	34	1	1	13
Personnel officers	(542)	52	40	0	1	6
Who represent high insurance risks:						
Health officers	(400)	49	40	0	1	10
Personnel officers	(542)	53	41	0	•	6

^aVolunteered response.

*Indicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Physical Fitness

There was almost universal agreement among corporate health and personnel officers that their companies would consider it acceptable to conduct preemployment medical examinations to identify job applicants who *were physically unfit for employment*. Nine out of ten (89 percent) corporate personnel officers said that their companies would consider it acceptable to conduct a preemployment health examination for that purpose. About the same proportion (92 percent) of corporate health officers agreed that this use of preemployment examinations would be acceptable (table 2-10).

Drug Use

The acceptability of using preemployment health examinations to identify job applicants who were *currently using drugs* was also almost universal. Nine out of ten personnel officers (89 percent) said that their companies would consider it acceptable to conduct preemployment examinations for that purpose. A similar proportion of health officers (86 percent) agreed with them.

Workplace Risks

The majority of personnel and health officers also reported that the use of preemployment examinations would be considered acceptable in their companies to identify job applicants who *were at increased risk to workplace hazards*. Six out of seven personnel officers (84 percent) reported that their companies would consider it acceptable to screen job applicants for increased risk to workplace hazards. About the same proportion of corporate health officers (85 percent) concurred.

Emotional and Psychological Stability

The majority of corporate officials responding to the survey also reported that their companies would consider the use of preemployment health exams to identify persons who were *emotionally or psychologically unstable* as appropriate. Nearly 3 out of 4 personnel officers (73 percent) said that the use of preemployment exams for this purpose would be considered acceptable to their companies. A similar proportion of health officers (77 percent) agreed that this use of preemployment health examinations would be acceptable.

Table 2-11—Preemployment Screening Requirements

Q. IO. As part of your preemployment hiring practices, do you currently require each of the following as a condition of employment for all applicants, only applicants for certain plants or job classifications or histories, or for no applicants?

(Base: Personnel officers)

	Unweighed base	All applicants	Selected plants/ jobs	Selected renditions/ histories	Percent		
					Both*	None	No answer
Routine physical examination.	(569)	51	14	3	1	31	1
Other medical criteria, e.g., lower back x-ray, allergy testing	(569)	10	18	11	2	56	2
Personality/psychological testing	(569)	2	9	5		81	3
Drug testing	(569)	38	10	1	*	48	3

*Both "plants/jobs" and "conditions/histories" volunteered.

†Indicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Insurance Risks

In addition to issues of physical and behavioral suitability for employment, the health and personnel officers were asked about the acceptability of using preemployment health examinations to identify job applicants who represented *high insurance risks*. About half (53 percent) of the corporate personnel officers surveyed reported that screening for high insurance risk would be an acceptable reason for preemployment examinations in their companies. A similar proportion of health officers (49 percent) agreed with them.

Genetic Susceptibility

The survey also found that a majority of the corporate health and personnel officers concurred that their companies would consider it acceptable to screen job applicants for genetic susceptibility to workplace exposures. Fifty-two percent of personnel officers and 51 percent of health officers reported that their companies would approve of a preemployment health examination to identify job applicants with *genetic susceptibility to workplace exposures*.

Types of Preemployment Examinations

The survey interviewed the corporate personnel officers about some of the types of preemployment examinations that might be required of job applicants.

Physical Examinations

The majority of personnel officers (51 percent) reported that *routine physical examinations* were required as a condition of employment for applicants, regardless of plant or job classifications, or

medical conditions or histories. A smaller number (14 percent) reported that routine physical examinations were required as a condition of employment for at least certain plants or job classifications. However, 31 percent of corporate personnel officers reported that their preemployment hiring practices required no routine physical examinations for applicants (table 2-1 1).

Drug Testing

Drug testing, as part of preemployment examinations, was also reported by many personnel officers. Nearly 4 out of 10 (38 percent) companies reported that *drug testing* was required as a condition of employment for all job applicants. In addition, another 10 percent required drug testing as part of the preemployment hiring practices for at least certain plants or job classifications. Only 1 percent reported that drug testing was restricted to job applicants with certain medical conditions or histories. Forty-eight percent reported that their preemployment hiring practices required no drug testing for applicants.

Other Medical Criteria

A number of companies (10 percent) required *other medical criteria*, such as lower back x-rays or allergy testing, for all jobs. However, some companies required other medical criteria as part of their hiring practices for certain plants or job classifications (18 percent), applicants with certain medical conditions or histories (11 percent), or both (2 percent). Fifty-six percent reported that their preemployment hiring practices required no other medical criteria as part of their preemployment hiring practices.

Table 2-1 2—Tests Conducted for Preemployment Examinations

Q.3. Which of the following are normally part of the preemployment examination in your company for nonadministrative Positions? ^a

(Base: Health officers in companies that require preemployment examinations of job applicants)

Unweighted base	(400)
Personal medical history.....	93%
Family medical history.....	65
Simple physical examinations.....	89
Standard blood chemistry tests.....	55
EKG.....	16
Chest x-ray.....	43
Pulmonary function test.....	22
Eye and hearing exam.....	67
Urinalysis for drug abuse.....	54
Lower back x-ray.....	20
Don't know ^b	
No answer.....	3

^aRespondents could give more than one answer.

^bVolunteered response.

^cIndicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

By contrast, *personality and/or psychological testing* is rare as part of preemployment examinations. Four out of five personnel directors (81 percent) said that it was never required. Whereas, 9 percent reported that personality or psychological testing was required for certain plants or job classifications and 5 percent said it was required for applicants with certain medical conditions or histories. In light of the fact that the majority of corporate officials reported that their companies would consider using preemployment health exams to identify persons who were emotionally or psychologically unstable as appropriate, it is interesting to note that this type of testing is rare.

Screening for Nonadministrative Positions

Corporate health officers, who reported that preemployment examinations were required of at least some employees, were asked what kinds of tests were normally part of the preemployment examinations in their companies for nonadministrative positions. A personal medical history was the most commonly reported requirement (93 percent) of the preemployment examination (table 2-12). Many also required simple physical examinations (89 percent) as part of preemployment examination for nonadministrative positions. Eye and hearing exams (67 percent) and family medical histories (65 percent) were frequently reported as normal parts of preemployment examinations.

Table 2-13-Preemployment Test Policies: informing Applicants of Positive Results

Q. II. Is it company policy to inform applicants of positive test results?

(Base: Personnel officers in companies that require any type of examination of job applicants)

Unweighted base	(473)
Yes.....	81%
No.....	16
Not sure.....	1
No answer.....	3

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

In 4 out of 10 (38 percent) companies surveyed, the corporate personnel officer indicated that drug testing was required for all positions. The health officers confirmed this widespread adoption among large corporations of routine drug testing at the preemployment stage. Among health officers in corporations with any preemployment examinations, 54 percent reported that urinalysis for drug use was a normal part of the preemployment examination for nonadministrative positions. This represents 44 percent of the total health officer sample.

More than half (55 percent) of companies requiring any form of preemployment exams reported requiring standard blood chemistry tests. A minority also reported requiring chest x-rays (43 percent) or pulmonary function tests (22 percent). A lower back x-ray was required as part of the normal preemployment examination of job applicants by 20 percent of the companies requiring preemployment exams. One-sixth (16 percent) said that electrocardiograms (EKGs) were a normal part of the preemployment exam.

Release of Examination Results to Applicants

The personnel officers in companies conducting any type of examination of job applicants as part of their preemployment hiring practices were asked whether or not it was company policy to inform applicants of positive (abnormal findings) test results. In most cases (81 percent), the corporate personnel officer reported that the company policy was to inform applicants of positive test results from their preemployment examination. However, among the corporations conducting preemployment health examinations as part of their hiring practices, 16 percent reported that it was not company policy to inform applicants of positive test results (table 2-13).

Table 2-14-Types of Preemployment Exam Results Normally Released

Q.4. Which of the following types of preemployment examinations would normally be released to job applicants?^a

(Base: Health officers in companies with any form of preemployment examination)

Unweighted base	(400)
Normal results (negative findings)	22%
Positive findings already indicated in medical history	15
Positive findings not reflected in medical history..	21
Positive findings which disqualify them from employment	22
Positive findings which affect position/site eligibility	15
All of the above	50
Net: Normal results only.....	3
Net: Positive results only.	63
None	12

^aRespondents could give more than one answer.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Corporate health officers were asked a slightly different question. Those in companies that conducted any form of preemployment examination were asked what kinds of results from a preemployment examination would normally be released to a job applicant. Fifty percent reported that both normal results (negative findings) and any type of positive findings would usually be released to a job applicant (table 2-14). In addition, another 22 percent reported that positive findings which disqualified the applicant from employment were released; 21 percent reported that positive findings not reflected in the medical history were released; 15 percent reported that positive findings which affected eligibility for positions or sites were released; and 15 percent reported that positive findings already indicated in the medical history were released. However, mirroring the response of the personnel officers, 12 percent of the health officers in companies conducting preemployment health examinations reported that no results from the preemployment exams were normally released to job applicants.

In companies that release information from the preemployment health examinations to job applicants, the information was normally released to the job applicant as part of a consultation with the medical staff. This was done through a medical consultation only (47 percent), or with both a letter and medical consultation (23 percent). Few compa-

Table 2-15-How Information on Preemployment Exams Is Normally Released

Q.5. How would that information normally be released to job applicants?

(Base: Health officers in companies that normally release results of preemployment examinations)

Unweighted base	(335)
Letter	6%
Consultation with medical staff...	47
Both	23
Consultation and other	2
Other	21

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

Table 2-16-Company Referrals to Health Care Providers If Positive Results Are Obtained From Preemployment Tests

Q.11a. Is it company policy to refer applicants to appropriate health care providers if positive test results are obtained?

(Base: Personnel officers in companies that require any type of examination of job applicants)

Unweighed base	(473)
Yes	59%
No	36
Don't know ^a	•
No answer	4

^aVolunteered response.

^aIndicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.

nies reported releasing the information to job applicants through letters alone (6 percent) (table 2-15).

According to corporate personnel officers in companies that did release examination results to job applicants, most companies took steps to refer applicants with positive results to health care providers. Six out of ten (59 percent) personnel officers in companies that released test results said that it was company policy to refer applicants to appropriate health care providers if positive test results were obtained. On the other hand, 36 percent reported that it was not company policy to refer applicants with positive results to health care providers (table 2-16).

Who Decides on Preemployment Tests

Over half (53 percent) of the corporate health officers surveyed said that the corporate personnel office determined which specific tests were apart of the preemployment screening (table 2-17). By contrast, only 27 percent said that the corporate health

office determines which tests were part of the preemployment screening of job applicants. In only a minority of cases did either the health office (11 percent) or the personnel office (16 percent) at the location or establishment level determine which specific tests were performed. These figures added up to more than 100 percent because some respondents indicated more than one office was involved in determining which specific tests would be part of the preemployment screening.

The survey findings indicated that in most companies (72 percent) decisions about specific tests to be used in preemployment screening were made at the *corporate* level. Moreover, in the majority of companies (63 percent), decisions were made about preemployment tests by the personnel office, rather than by the health office.

Table 2-17-Company Office That Determines Inclusion of Tests in Preemployment Screening

Q.30a. Which office determines whether or not a specific test will be conducted as part of preemployment screening?^a

(Base: Health officers)

Unweighed base	(494)
Corporate personnel	53%
Corporate health	27
Location personnel	16
Location health.	11
Other	5
Don't know ^b	•
No answer	11
Net: Corporate	72
Net: Personnel	63
Net: Health	35

^aRespondents could give more than one answer.

^bVolunteered response.

^cIndicates less than 1 percent.

SOURCE: Office of Technology Assessment, 1991.