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Letter from the Industrial Physician

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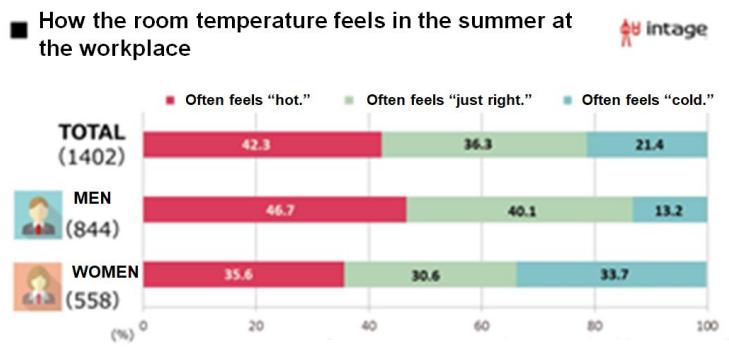
Office room temperatures should be discussed and decided upon carefully !

It is now May. The weather is gradually changing from "warm" to "hot. As the temperature rises, setting the office room temperature becomes more important. This is because the room temperature affects work performance. In general, women seem to prefer higher room temperatures than men, and some data actually shows this (see figure below). According to this survey, the average air conditioning setting temperature that men find comfortable is 25.0°C, while women find it 25.7°C, indicating that women tend to prefer slightly higher temperatures.

Academic studies have reported similar results. A study by Maastricht University in the Netherlands points out that conventional office temperature settings are determined based on men, which causes them to be too cold for women (Ref.1). It reports that the standard temperature setting (22-23°C) is uncomfortable for women, who have a lower metabolic rate, and can cause reduced productivity and concentration.

Furthermore, a study published in 2019 by the Berlin Social Science Center in Germany found that women perform better on mathematical and verbal tasks when the room temperature is around 27°C, while men tend to perform better in the 22-24°C range (Ref.2). This indicates that appropriate temperature settings vary by gender and that uniform climate control does not optimize performance. Thus, evidence supports that there are differences between men and women in the temperatures they find comfortable and the cognitive and physical responses these temperatures elicit. Therefore, workplace room temperature management must be flexible and based on gender differences. It will be necessary to improve the comfort of workers by creating an environment that allows individual temperature control and by utilizing a free address system.



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Ref.1：Kingma & van Marken Lichtenbelt, Nature Climate Change, 5, (12), 2015: DOI:10.1038/nclimate2741

Ref.2：Chang & Kajackaite, PLoS One, 14, (5), 2019: DOI: 10.1371 /journal.pone.0216362