

Health and work environment among women in unskilled occupations

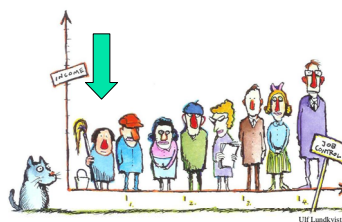
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Unskilled vs skilled work

- Work place factors influence health (O`Campo, 2004)
- Prevalence of health problems are higher among unskilled than among skilled employees
- Unskilled work involve more often repetitive and monotonous work tasks than skilled work does
- Unskilled work is influenced by bigger stress load (Lundberg, 1999)

Women and unskilled work

- Labour market is still divided by gender (Steven, 2000)
- Labour market restricts both autonomy and reward for women (Denmark, 1996)
- "Pink-collar" jobs are typical women jobs – nursing, office secretary, cleaning, cooking
- Traditionally such jobs had the low status with limited benefits or possibilities for developing.



ORIGINAL ARTICLE Taylor & Francis
Healthsciences

Duration of employment is not a predictor of disability of cleaners: a longitudinal study

Migle Gamperiene¹, Jan F. Nygård¹, Sören Brage¹, Tor Bjerkedal² and Dag Bruusgaard¹

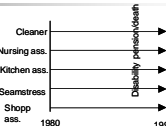
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Scand J Public Health 2003; 31: 63-68

- Hypotheses
- 1. Cleaners have a higher risk of obtaining a disability pension than persons in other unskilled occupations
- 2. The longer persons are exposed to the hazards of cleaning, the higher the risk of being disability pensioned

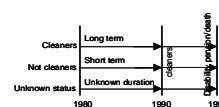
I sample

- 103 375 women (cleaners, nursing assistant, kitchen assistant, seamstress, shop assistant)



II sample

- 44 907 women (long term, short term and unknown duration)



- Disability pensions rates were higher among cleaners than among other women in unskilled occupations

BUT

- The risk for obtaining disability pension did not increase with increasing duration of working as a cleaner
- Selection effect?



Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology



Research

Open Access

The impact of psychosocial and organizational working conditions on the mental health of female cleaning personnel in Norway
Migle Gamperiene^{*1}, Jan F Nygård^{2,3}, Inger Sandanger², Morten Wærstedt⁴ and Dag Bruusgaard¹

- Aim**
To explore the association between psychosocial and organizational working conditions and level of mental health distress among women employed in the cleaning profession

- 7 cleaning organizations organized under the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise
- 661 questionnaires
- 423 persons (49 men and 374 women)
- Self-reported work environment and mental health:
 - sociodemography
 - working conditions
 - organizational work environment
 - psychosocial work environment (Factor analysis)
 - mental health (anxiety/depression) (HSCL-25 Checklist)



- 17, 5 % reported mental health problems (vs 8,4 % among average working Norwegian women)
- Important factors of the psychosocial working environment: leadership, collaboration with colleagues, time press, control and information/knowledge
- Poor leadership, bad collaboration to colleagues and being an immigrant has a strong association to mental health problems



Self-reported work ability of Norwegian women in relation to physical and mental health, and to the work environment

Submitted Journal of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology

Migle Gamperiene MD¹, Jan F. Nygård BSc PhD², Inger Sandanger MD PhD³, Bjørn Lau PhD⁴, Dag Bruusgaard MD PhD¹

- Aim to examine**
 - work ability reduces with age and bad physical and mental health
 - work ability reduces while physical, psychosocial and organizational work environment problems increase
 - this influence women in skilled and unskilled occupations differently

Part of prospective, population-based study, which investigated issues related to mental health within two geographic areas in NORWAY

- 1691 persons (888 men and 803 women)
- 597 occupational active women
- Structured interview :
 - demography
 - physical health
 - working environment
 - mental health (anxiety/depression) (HSCL-25 Checklist)
 - work ability ("How do you estimate your work ability today?")

- Results shows that age, together with bad self reported physical health and unskilled job, was a strongest associated with reduced work ability
- Influence of work environment on reduced work ability was observed only in univariate analyses

Conclusions

- In addition to the "classic" and expected associations between the physical work environment and health among unskilled women, significant associations existed between health and the psychosocial and organizational aspects of the workplace
- Mental health problems arise if quality of leadership and collaboration between colleagues are bad. Foreign background strengthen results
- Some unskilled occupations are influenced by "Unhealthy Worker Effect"



Conclusions

- New definition of "Unhealthy Worker Effect"

"A phenomenon in which workers in jobs with low-entry demands or requirements exhibit high morbidity rates partly because of selection of unhealthy persons into employment".

Conclusions

- Modernization of labour market offer less flexible possibilities than earlier
- Problematic developments for "marginal workforce" given that workplaces for less educated individuals may disappear
- Clear contradiction between Inclusion and the increasing trend to raise requirements for entrance into the workforce, even in jobs considered "unskilled"

Thank you for attention



Ulf Lundqvist