

# Factors in work environment associated with absence from work. Results from a longitudinal study of 3,902 Danish employees.

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## AIM

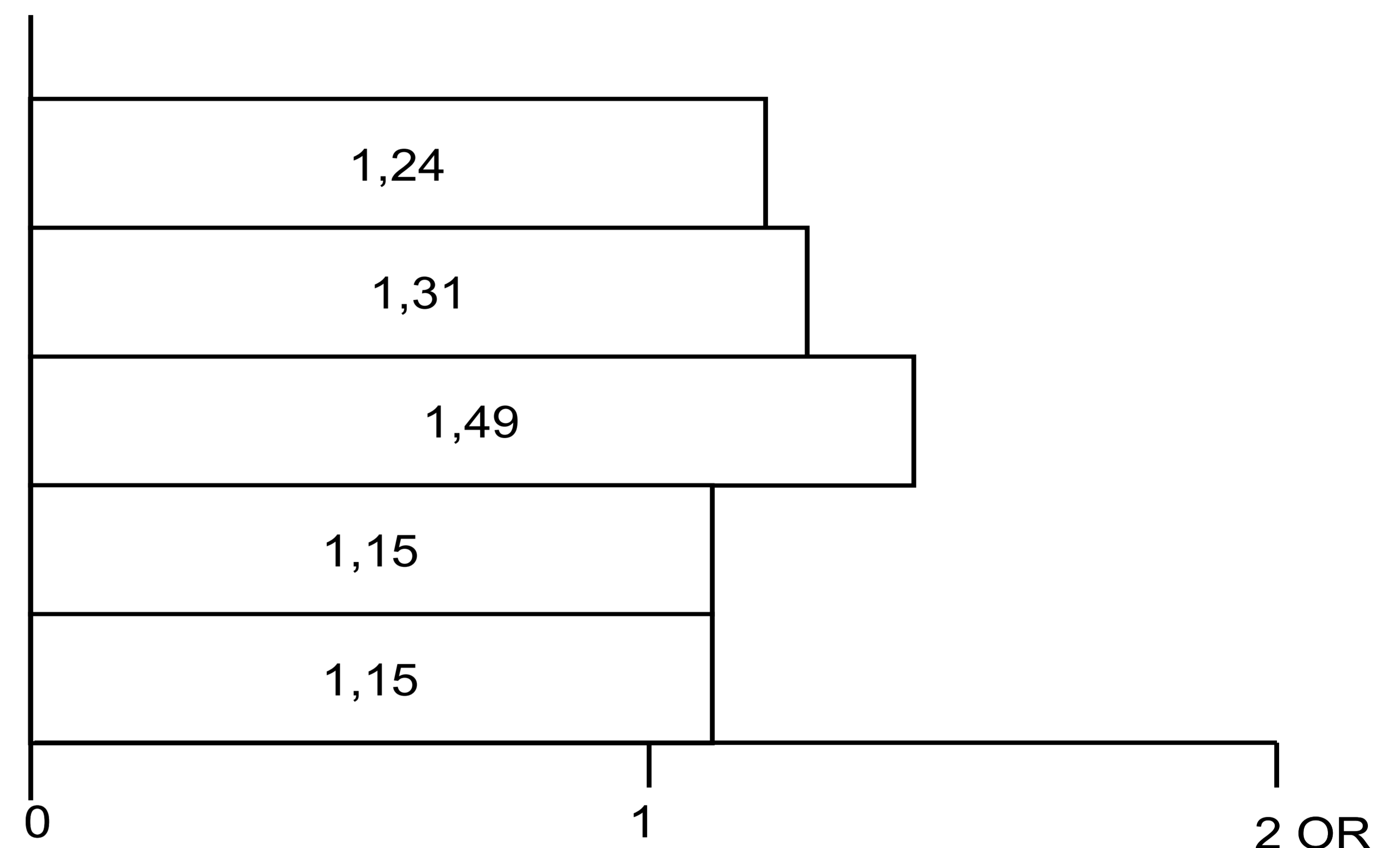
To study associations between psychosocial and ergonomic work environment exposures and absence from work 5 years later among Danish employees.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The results suggest a potential for reducing absence from work through interventions towards ergonomic and psychosocial work environment exposures.

## Occupational risk factors for 5-year elevated absence :

- repetitive monotonous work
- work with arms lifted/hands twisted
- extreme bending/stooping of the back/neck
- low skill discretion
- low decision authority



\* These associations persisted independently of Body Mass Index, Self-rated Health, smoking status, public/private employment, age and sex

## METHODS

In 1995, a random sample of 4,647 employees aged 18-64, were interviewed regarding work environment and health. In 2000, a cohort of 3.902 still employed at follow-up was re-interviewed regarding days absent from work the year preceding date of follow-up.

- "Elevated absence in year preceding follow-up". This outcome was based on self-reported days of absence the year preceding the date of follow-up.
- "Elevated absence" was defined as the quartile of the employees with most days of absence (> 5 days).

## RESULTS

- The 3,902 employees reported a total of 24,820 days of absence during the year preceding follow-up (mean = 6.35, range 0-215 days).
- 2,373 employees (60 %) had one or more days of absence.
- The 25 % of the employees with most absence accounted for more than 80% of total days of absence.
- In the two extreme 10 % composite risk groups, 39 % of those exposed to the highest level of composite risk had elevated absence, whereas the figure was 12 % among those exposed to the lowest level of composite risk.
- The proportion of cases with elevated absence that could be explained by differences in work environment exposures (etiologic fraction) was estimated to 40%.