



Psychosocial Predictors of short and long Spells of registered Sickness Absence during a Two-year Follow-up

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East Meets West - Job Stress Prevention in a Global Perspective



Intervention Project on Absence and Well-being - **The IPAW study**



A controlled study of the effect on absence of interventions to improve the psychosocial aspects of work environment

Workplaces in IPA W

- **Municipality of Copenhagen**

Municipal care:

- 15 Nursing homes for the elderly
- 7 Institutions for mentally handicapped

Technical services:

- 17 workshops, cemeteries, parks, roadworkers, etc.

- **Pharmaceutical company**

- 5 Production units
- 3 Laboratories
- 5 Catering and cleaning departments

Participants at baseline

- 2712 employees (temporary contracts excl.)
- 2056 responded (75.8 %)
- **1919** with company absence records

Psychosocial factors at work

- Psychological demands
- Decision authority
- Skill discretion
- Social support from supervisor
- Social support from colleagues
- Meaningfulness of work
- Predictability/information

Short spells (1-10 days)

	Women			Men		
	RR	CI	p	RR	CI	P
Psychological demands	0.99	0.94-1.05	0.80	1.01	0.94-1.09	0.82
Skill discretion	1.06	1.01-1.12	0.03	0.97	0.90-1.05	0.47
Decision authority	0.97	0.91-1.03	0.29	0.95	0.87-1.02	0.17
Support from supervisor	0.98	0.93-1.04	0.52	0.93	0.87-0.99	0.03
Support from colleagues	0.96	0.91-1.01	0.14	1.03	0.96-1.10	0.38
Predictability	0.95	0.90-1.01	0.08	0.91	0.85-0.99	0.02
Meaning	1.01	0.96-1.07	0.67	0.91	0.86-0.98	0.01

Adjusted for age, family type, alcohol consumption, smoking, body mass index, organization, intervention assignment, and 10 measures of physical work environment: twisting the back, stooping work position, lifting more than 30 kg, pushing/pulling heavy burdens, repeating the same job task many times per hour, loud noise, temperature fluctuations, cold, dust and physical activity.

Significant results printed in bold.

Long spells (>10 days)

	Women			Men		
	RR	CI	p	RR	CI	P
Psychological demands	1.13	1.01-1.26	0.03	0.96	0.81-1.14	0.63
Skill discretion	1.06	0.95-1.19	0.31	1.01	0.86-1.19	0.91
Decision authority	0.83	0.74-0.93	0.00	0.81	0.68-0.96	0.02
Support from supervisor	0.98	0.88-1.10	0.77	0.82	0.71-0.95	0.01
Support from colleagues	0.95	0.86-1.06	0.38	1.01	0.87-1.16	0.94
Predictability	1.00	0.90-1.12	0.97	0.82	0.69-0.96	0.02
Meaning	1.02	0.91-1.15	0.68	1.02	0.88-1.19	0.78

Adjusted for age, family type, alcohol consumption, smoking, body mass index, organization, intervention assignment, and 10 measures of physical work environment: twisting the back, stooping work position, lifting more than 30 kg, pushing/pulling heavy burdens, repeating the same job task many times per hour, loud noise, temperature fluctuations, cold, dust and physical activity.

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Effects of confounder control

- The included demographic and health behavior variables made only minor changes
- Adjustment for physical work environment reduced estimates and made decision authority insignificant for short spells
- Physical work environment has not been included in mosts previous studies on psychosocial factors and absence
- Adjusting for SES causes only marginal changes

Previous findings on absence days

- Both genders:
 - Decision authority
(RR=0.80 in women, 0.79 in men)
- Men:
 - Predictability (RR=0.79)
 - Supervisor support (RR=0.81)

Summary

- Decision authority is the strongest predictor in both genders – but only for long spells!
- In men, supervisor support and predictability predict both short and long spells – as also found for absence days
- In women, demands predict long spells and skill discretion seems to predict *more* short spells