

Psychosocial Work Environment and Incidence of Severe Depressive Symptoms

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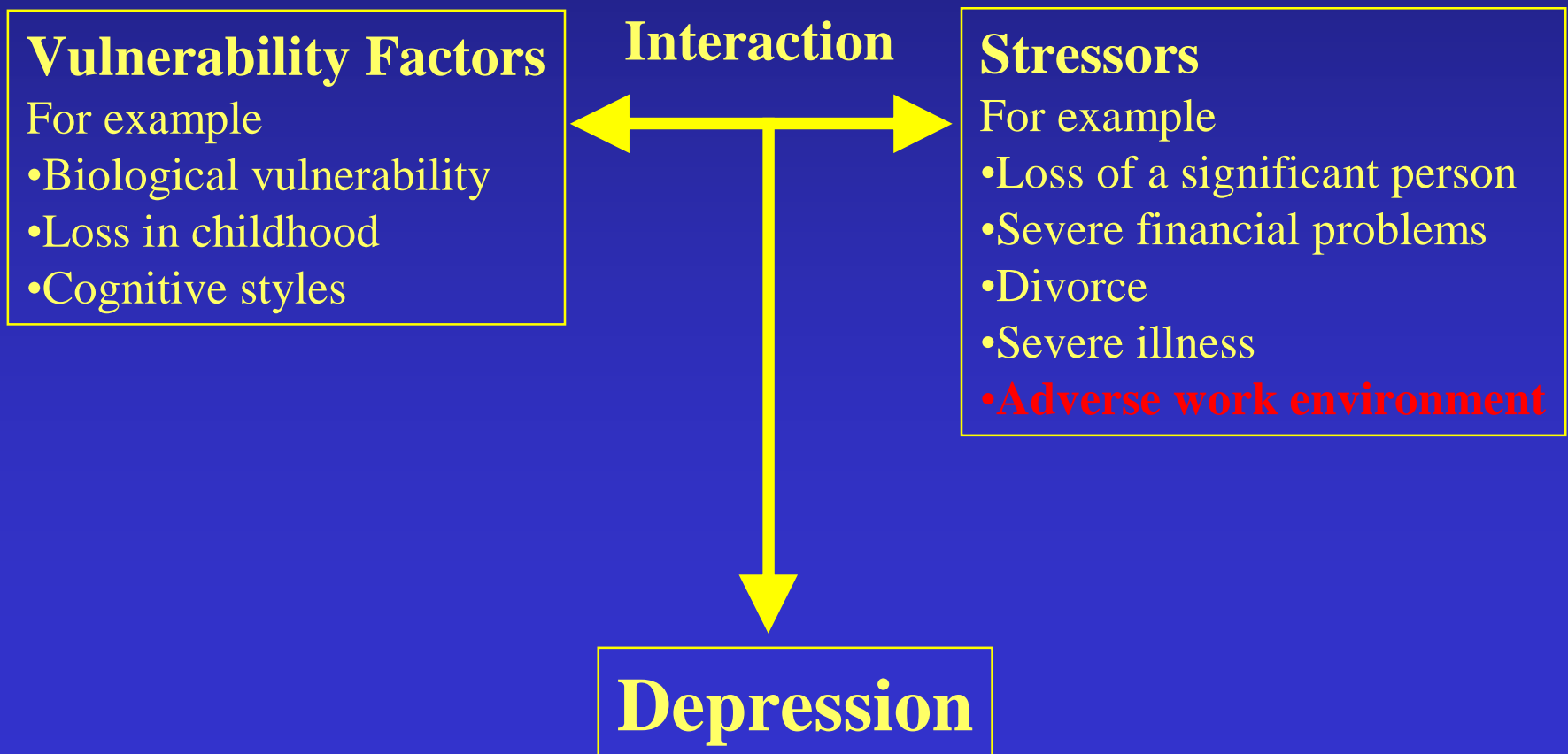


Why work and depression?

- Depression has a high prevalence in highly developed countries
- Depression has severe consequences for the individual
- Depression has potential severe consequences for the society
- Work environment might affect risk of depression

Diatheses-Stress-Model

Depression as a result of the interaction
between vulnerability factors and stressors



Objective of the Study

To analyze the impact of adverse psychosocial work environment characteristics (stressors) on risk of developing severe depressive symptoms in a representative sample of the Danish working population.

Study Design and Methods

- 4,133 employees (49% women), aged 18-65, from the Danish Work Environment Cohort Study (DWECS) followed-up for 5 years
- Participants with severe depressive symptoms at baseline were excluded from the analysis
- All measures based on questionnaires and administered by telephone
- Psychosocial workplace factors measured in 1995
- Severe depressive symptoms measured in 1995 and 2000

Measurement of Psychosocial Work Environment Characteristics

- Quantitative demands (1 item)
- Influence at work (3-item scale)
- Possibilities for development (3-item scale)
- Social support from supervisors (1 item)
- Social support from coworkers (1 item)
- Job insecurity (indicator, based on 4 items)

- All 6 variables were dichotomized (high/low exposure)

Measurement of Severe Depressive Symptoms

- Severe depressive symptoms were measured with the 5-item Mental Health Scale (MHI-5) from the SF-36
- Scale is standardized from 0 to 100
- Participants scoring 52 points or less were classified with severe depressive symptoms

Results:

Participants with severe depressive symptoms at follow-up

- 105 out of 4,133 participants (2.5%)
- 68 out of 2,004 women (3.4%)
- 37 out of 2,129 men (1.7%)

Impact of psychosocial work characteristics on risk of severe depressive symptoms in 2,004 employed women

Stressor	RR	95% CI	p
High quantitative demands	0.83	0.48-1.44	0.51
Low influence	2.17	1.23-3.82	0.007
Low poss. for development	1.11	0.66-1.87	0.69
Low supervisor support	2.03	1.20-3.43	0.008
Low coworker support	1.05	0.50-2.23	0.90
High job insecurity	1.21	0.73-1.99	0.46

Adjusted for age, cohabitation, having children at home, school education, smoking, alcohol consumption, leisure time physical activity, change in employment status during follow-up and depression score at baseline

Rugulies, R., Bültmann, U., Aust, B., Burr, H. (in press). Psychosocial work environment and incidence of severe depressive symptoms. Prospective findings from a 5-year follow-up of the Danish Work Environment Cohort Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

Impact of psychosocial work characteristics on risk of severe depressive symptoms in 2,129 employed men

Exposure	RR	95% CI	p
High quantitative demands	0.46	0.18-1.19	0.11
Low influence	0.60	0.30-1.22	0.16
Low poss. for development	1.16	0.57-2.37	0.68
Low supervisor support	1.17	0.58-2.35	0.65
Low coworker support	1.29	0.59-2.84	0.53
High job insecurity	2.04	1.02-4.07	0.04

Adjusted for age, cohabitation, having children at home, school education, smoking, alcohol consumption, leisure time physical activity, change in employment status during follow-up and depression score at baseline

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Summary of Results

- Low influence at work and, low social support from supervisors predicted severe depressive symptoms in women
- High job insecurity predicted severe depressive symptoms in men

Strength of the Study

- Prospective design
- Representative sample of the general working population
- Adjustment for various non-work-related variables
- Not only exclusion of baseline depression cases, but also further adjustment for baseline depression score in the analyses

Limitations of the Study

- Depression not measured with gold-standard
- Long follow-up period
- Low number of cases, especially among men
- Limited measures for psychosocial work characteristics

Next Steps

Psychosocial Work Environment

Quantitative demands
Influence
Poss. for development
Social support
Job insecurity

Emotional demands
Rewards
Effort-reward imbalance
Justice at work
Meaning of work
Predictability at work
Role clarity
Role conflicts
Violence at work



Psychological Health

Depression measured with
- a proxy (MHI-5)
- diagnostic interview
- hospitalization registry
- prescribed antidepressant

Other psychological disorders
- anxiety disorders
- somatoform disorders
- substance abuse disorders
- subclinical symptoms of reduced psychological health



Consequences

Risk of physical disorders (CVD)

Reduced workability

Long-term sickness absence

Early retirement

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