

Well-being through work



Finnish Institute of
Occupational Health



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Challenges to prevention of psychosocial risks and protection of mental health of workers

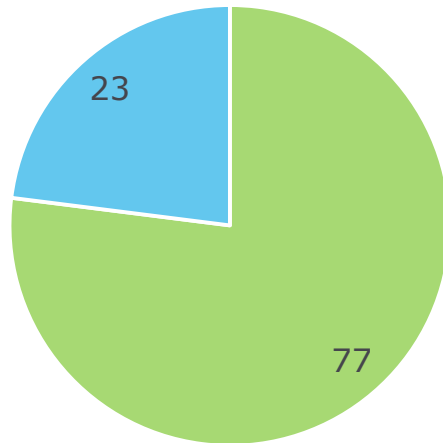
Kirsi Ahola, PhD, team leader

Well-being of European workers

(The fifth European Working Conditions Survey 2010, Eurofound)

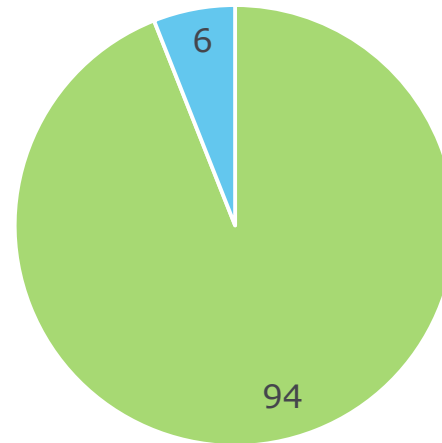


Well-being (WHO-5)



■ High ■ Low

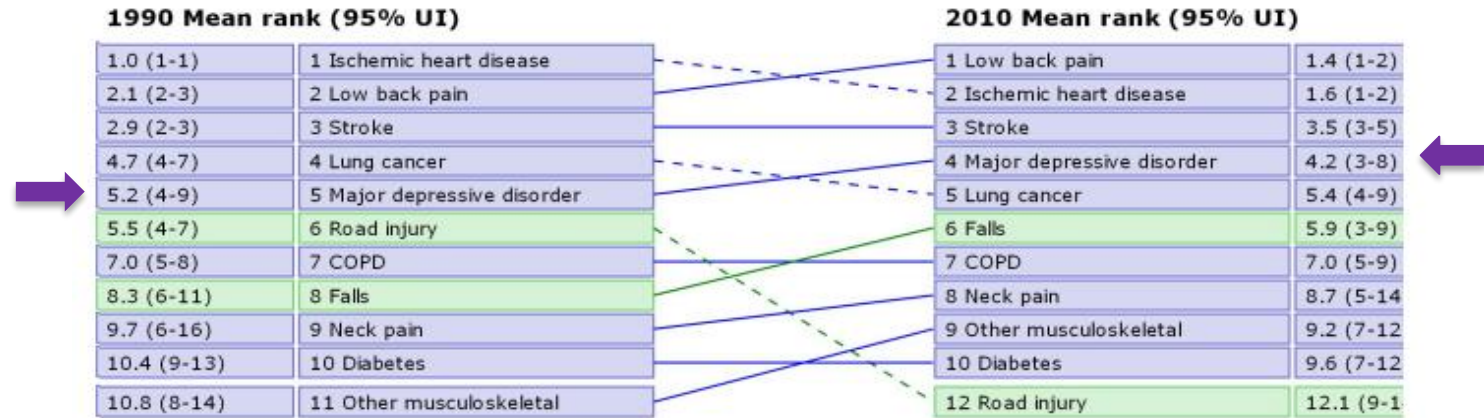
Depression



■ No ■ Yes

10 leading causes of DALYs in Western Europe

(WHO Global Burden of Diseases Study 2010, Murray et al. 2012)



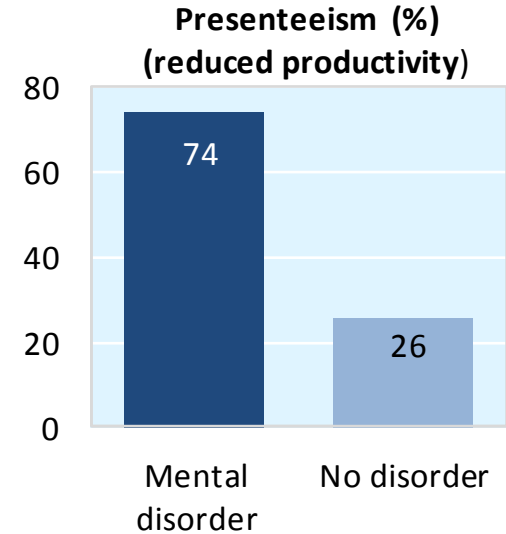
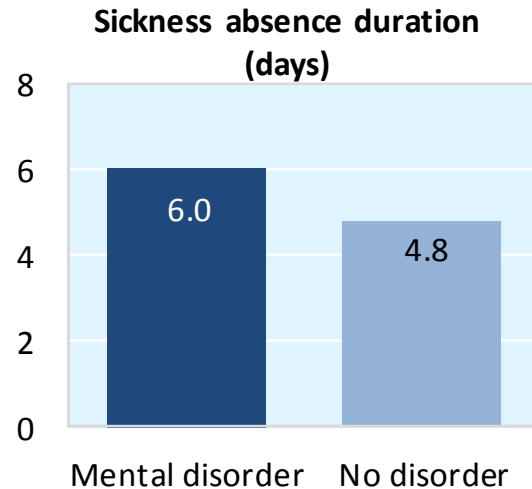
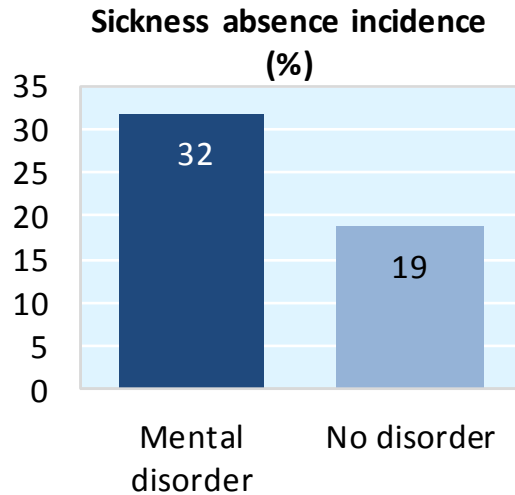
non-communicable diseases - injuries - communicable diseases

DALY = disability-adjusted life year; a measure of disease burden (a number of years lived with disability or lost due to early death)

<http://www.healthmetricsandevaluation.org/gbd/visualizations/regional>

Burden of mental disorders in work life

(21 European OECD countries, 2010)



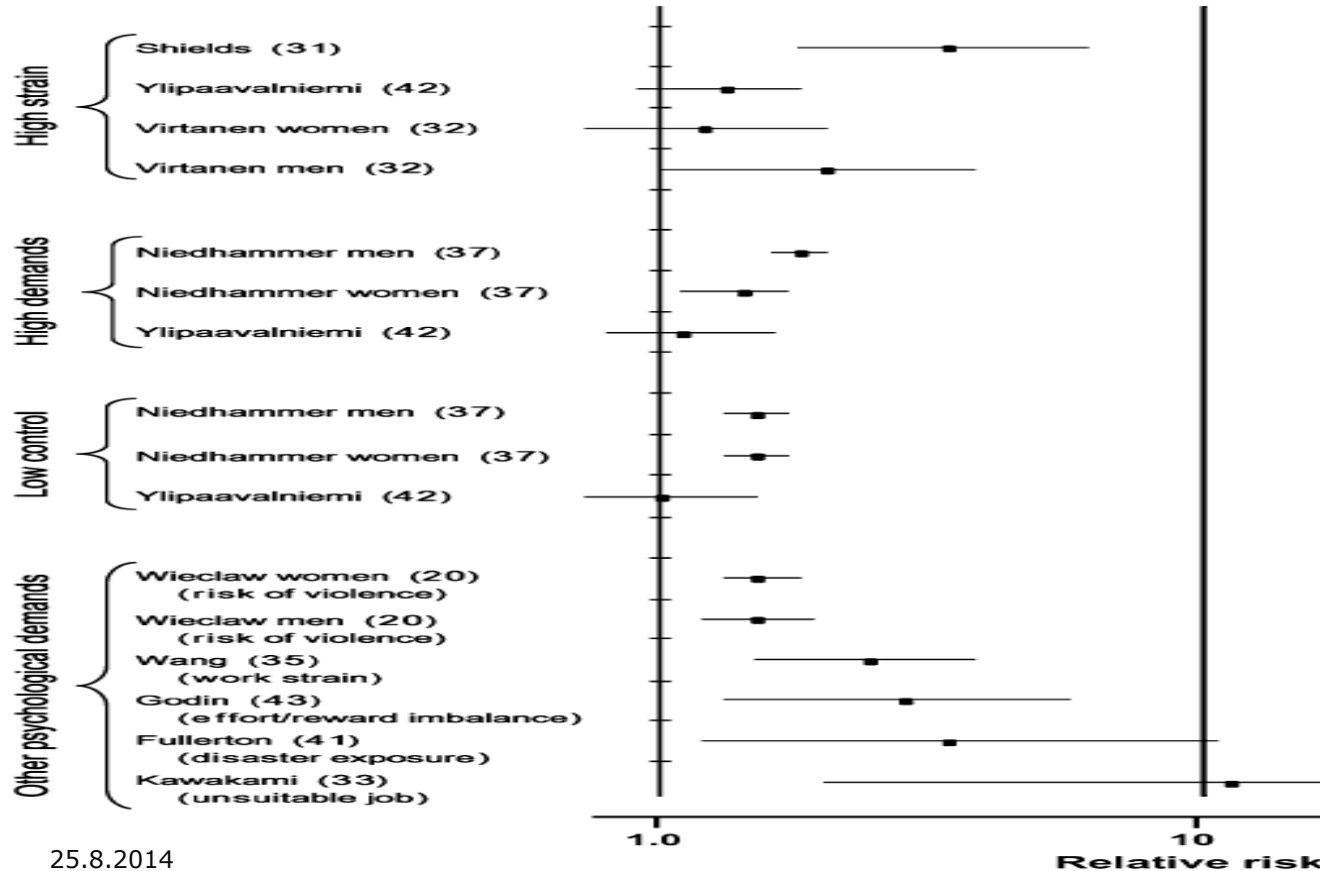
What are psychosocial risks?

(Eurofound 2010)

- Psychosocial factors
= aspects of work design, organization and management as well as the social and environmental contexts.
- Type of factors:
 - high job strain
 - atypical working hours
 - disruptive interruptions
 - exposure to restructuring
 - environmental hazards
 - job insecurity
- Psychosocial risks
= factors which may cause psychological, social or physical harm to the employees.
- Type of harm:
 - physical illness
 - mental disorders
 - increased sickness absence
 - early retirement

Psychosocial factors and mental health

(Netterstrøm et al. 2008)



EU regulations regarding stress



| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Legal obligation | For European employers: To ensure the safety and health of workers, in every aspect related to work. | European Council Framework Directive "Introduction of Measures to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health of Workers at Work"; 89/391/EEC |
| General standards | For managing psychosocial risks at work | European Commission Guidance on Work-Related Stress, 2000 |
| Specific framework agreements | On Work-related Stress and on Harassment and Violence at work | European Social Partners, 2004 and 2007 |

Good practices at the EU level: The PRIMA-EF project (Leka & Cox 2008)



- European framework for psychosocial risk management
- Iterative process including
 - risk assessment
 - audits
 - action plan
 - risk reduction
 - evaluation
 - organizational learning.

<http://www.prima-ef.org/prima-ef-book.html>

Work is relevant to mental health in many ways



- The employed are happier and healthier than the unemployed.
- The above applies to work in good conditions:
 - Work in adverse conditions may be more detrimental to health than having no work at all.
- Being able to return to work in case of an illness may help sustaining mental health.
 - Work modification may be necessary.

Good practices at the organizational level:

Return to work promotion (Reavley et al. 2012)



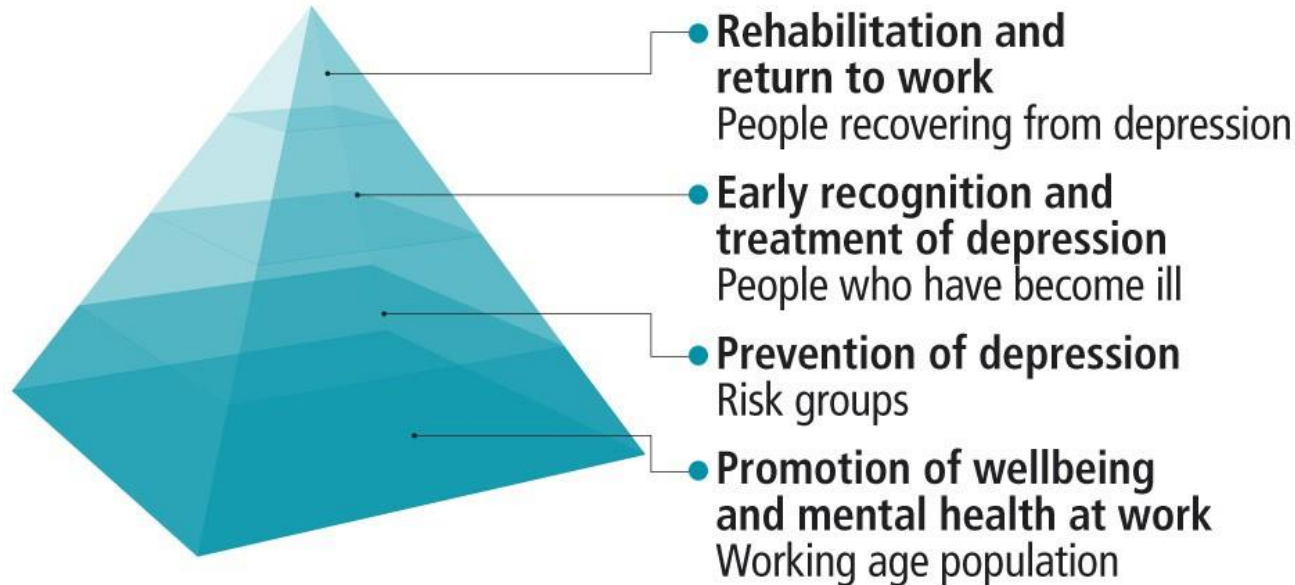
Delphi consensus study:

- Company policy around return to work
- Environment supportive of mental health
- Absence management
- Return-to-work management
- Return-to-work plan
- Employee involvement
- Consistent encouragement.

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/12/135>

Mental health protection at work should apply to all workers

(Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011)



Lessions learned

(PRIMA-EF, Leka & Cox 2008)



| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychosocial risk management is good for business. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It works better as a broad agenda than single measures. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk management is systematic, ongoing and practical problem solving. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimum standard obligations should be set in legal requirements. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All parties must be included. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Managers and workers are the main actors. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approach should be contextualized and tailored. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment is best as systematic and holistic. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis is on primary prevention. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills and capability must be acquired. |

Good practices at the national

level: High level “umbrella” for different projects

(Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011)



Finnish Masto-project to reduce depression-related work disability:

- Developing good practices for occupational health services
- Promoting cooperation between work places, occupational health services and psychiatry
- Taking up mental health themes in the training organized for occupational health and safety personnel and work place supervisors
- Supporting the treatment of depression in its initial phases within primary care services.

Future challenges



1. Accurate knowledge on mental health

- Awareness raising
- Stigma reduction
- Training

2. Development of policies and agreements

- Local operationalization
- Continuous evaluation

3. Decent work

- Flexible work arrangements
- Possibilities to job modification



Thank You!

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