Gender Equality is an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Issue

Learnings from Assignment om Womens’ Work Environment and Gender Mainstreaming at the Swedish Work Environment Authority

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Womens´ Work Environment
Commission by the Swedish Government 2011 - 2016

Preventing the exclusion of women from working life due to factors in work environment

• State of knowledge
• Development of methods
• Training of inspectors
• Performance of inspections
• Communication
• Cooperation with social partners and other actors
• Evaluation
Reported Work Related Disorders 2018 in Sweden

Women: n = 5 549
- Psycho social factors: 45%
- Musculo skeletal (MSD): 26%
- Respiratory tract: 9%
- Skin: 3%
- Nervous system: 3%
- Tinnitus: 1%
- Cardio Vascular: 1%
- Hearing deficiency due to noise: 1%
- Others: 11%

Men: n = 3 370
- Psycho social factors: 20%
- Musculo skeletal (MSD): 38%
- Respiratory tract: 7%
- Skin: 3%
- Nervous system: 3%
- Tinnitus: 7%
- Cardio Vascular: 3%
- Hearing deficiency due to noise: 7%
- Others: 20%
Sickness benefit days (by gender) in Sweden

Sweden

Sickness benefit days (by gender) in Sweden


Women Men w/m right axis

Sickness benefit days

0,0 2,0 4,0 6,0 8,0 10,0 12,0 14,0 16,0 18,0 20,0


Difference in sickness benefits days between women/men - in percentage

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

87% 12,3 6,6

Januari 2020• Kvinns andel av sjp-talet

(Uppdated 20200220)
The ageing workforce – at EU-level

Table 2: Employment rates (%) of older workers by age group and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>45–49 years</th>
<th>50–54 years</th>
<th>55–59 years</th>
<th>60–64 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, fourth quarter, 2010

Figure 32: Percentage of workers aged 50–54 who do not think they will be able to do the same job when 60, by gender and occupation

Ref. Clas-Håkan Nygård, 2016, University of Tampere
Women’s work environment
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- Compilation of the state of knowledge
- Development of methods
- Training of inspectors
- Performance of inspections - evaluation
- Communication
- Cooperation with social partners and other actors
- Continuous evaluation
Gender roles, traditions in occupations

Attitudes in health and among authorities

Same physiological effect, different effects

Gender roles, traditions in occupations

Same loads, different physiological effects

Hormone profile, muscle endurance

Same behaviour, different treatments

Employer attitudes inherent gender roles

Same task, different loads

Workplace design, muscle strength

Same job, different loads

Employer attitudes inherent gender roles

Different jobs

Segregated labour market

Factors (examples)

Lewis & Mathiassen
Physical Work, Gender & Health in Working Life
Report 2013::9
Summary of research

- Men and women have different tasks in the same occupations. This is an essential explanation for differences in work related musculoskeletal disorders between men and women.

- Men and women have different workloads on the same task. This is an important explanation for differences in work related musculoskeletal disorders between men and women.

- Men and women have different physiological responses despite the same workload. But this can not in any particular extent explain differences in prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders between men and women.
“Under the magnifying glass"

- Traditional beliefs and expectations about women and men inhibit continuous improvements and innovations in work environment.
- The employer needs to have special knowledge about the role gender has in organisations in order to pursue active OSH-management.
- Management support is crucial since the improvement process may require investment and influence on the prevailing structures: you need a top down support for a bottom up change

From: Under the magnifying glass - gender perspective on work environment and work organisation. Annika Vänje, Department of Work Science, Royal Technical Institute KTH. (The Swedish Work Environment Authority's report 2013:1 ENG)
Gender differences in work load

Women describe more than men

- High demands in the work task
- Tensed work (low influence and high demands)
- Emotional work
- Unclear targets
- Work related stress (at least half the working time unable to talk or think at something else but job related issues)

Gender differences

- Devison of payed and unpayed work, total work load
- Type of employment, organisation of work
- Segregated labour market, vertical and horizontal segregation
  - Sectors, private – public
  - Industries
  - Organisation
  - Professions
  - Work tasks
  - Low decision space, influence, salary, status
- Social situation, expectations, gender roles
- Ambitions, choice of profession
- Behaviour: coping, boundaries, sickness absence
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Supervision of female coded - and male coded work in municipalities

- Social home care and technical services in 65 municipalities, 7 000 – 310 000 inhabitants
- Parallell inspections of two operations in the same way and with a gender perspective - was unique
- Ca 70 inspectors participated
- Two inspectors
- Ca 900 inspections
## Overall comparison - employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social home care</th>
<th>Technical services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low degree of self monitoring and job decision space</td>
<td>Reasonable degree of self monitoring and job decision space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to manage the high workload</td>
<td>Can manage the work load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost always stressed</td>
<td>Sometimes stressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work load, staffing and other resources not adapted to expectations</td>
<td>Work load, staffing and other resources reasonably adapted to the expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Make Visible – Compare - Reflect
Overall comparison - managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social homecare</th>
<th>Technical services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73 percent of managers have more than 30 employees</td>
<td>10 percent of managers have more than 30 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time constraints, high administrative workload, many relations, difficult to be present in the daily work and support the employees</td>
<td>Pretty good possibilities to support the employees, can be present and manage challenges in the daily work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly stressed managers</td>
<td>Stressed managers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The organisation makes the difference for women's work environment

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xurUalBMa8Y&index=1&list=PLEIRHW0U5qeN4qt2rgZ74OKVssxBcji
Bee-hive

- What have I heard?
- What did I see
- What do I bring with me?

Take a few minutes to discuss
White paper – SWEA concludes

- The employer needs knowledge about the role gender has in organisations in order to be able to reveal the structures that drive health/ill-health
- Women and men work within different sectors with different pre-requisites and different occupational health and safety risks
- Physical and emotional strains are negative effects of working conditions. It is not about women and men, but about exposure
- Measures at central level needed in order to obtain a gender equal work environment
- Engagement of social partners is needed – networking a success factor
How to manage OSH with a gender perspective?

• Risk identification and evaluation
• Applies to all employers and includes all employees
• Includes all conditions
• Specifies requirements for the basic activities in OSH management
Define OSH policy

Annual evaluation

Investigate conditions

Investigate ill-health and accidents

Assess the risks

Carry out measures

Write an Action Plan

Check measures

Collaborate

Create procedures

Allocate tasks

Acquire knowledge

Improved Safety and Health at work

Exemple
OSH management system shown as a process
A way to visualise the gender perspective in OSH management system.

1. Evaluate Gender in OSH-Policy
2. Investigate women/men /task
3. Assess the risks (disorders and accidents)
4. Gender disaggregated statistics
5. Carry out measures
6. Write an Action Plan
7. Check Measures

Improved Safety and Health at work for both women and men.

Collaborate
Create clear procedures
Allocate tasks
Acquire knowledge

- Women and men represented
Tools
Doing gender – at work

• Structures formal and informal
  - Formal organisation, Work Environment policy, Work Environment Act, Working hours

• Interaction formal and informal
  - Meetings, formal and informal, Networking, Skills transfer

• Symbols
  - Valuation of professional areas and working tasks, wage determination, dress codes etc.

• Professional identity
  - Professional role, own and others’ expectations

Vänje, 2013, 2018
Acker, 1990
Kvande, 2003
Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming means:

- (re)organising
- improvement
- development
- evaluation of the process of decision making

So that gender mainstreaming is incorporated into all decision making, at all levels and at all stages of the process, by the persons who usually participate in decision-making.
Thank you for your attention!

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"Womens’ work environment“ – publications in english

- Report 2013:1E – Under the magnifying glas
- Report 2013:7E – Ergonomics in womens´ work environment
- Report 2013:9E - Physical work, gender and health in working life
- Report 2014:03E - Inspections of female and male dominated municipal activities, home care services and technical administration
- Report 2016:2E - Women’s and men’s working conditions: The significance of organizational factors and psychosocial work environment for occupational and health related outcomes
- Brochure ADI 690: How can the work environment be better for both women and men?

All publications available: www.av.se/inenglish/
A holistic approach for a sustainable worklife H T O

**Human**
Human beings are different

**Technique**
The technology relieves the human

**Organisation**
The organisation creates the prerequisites
Human beings are different

- Different size, strength, vision, hearing and health
- Different capabilities to relate to others
- Different ways to assimilate information and to plan work
- Differences in time in working life, experience and skills
- Different language and concentration capabilities

Human beings are different

- Different size, strength, vision, hearing and health
- Different capabilities to relate to others
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Technology
relieves human beings

Work place design after the tasks to be performed and employees working there

ICT programs are user friendly, intuitive and integrated

Machines and equipment are user friendly even during maintenance

Good visual and sound conditions

Machines and work equipment gives prerequisites for good ergonomics for all

Tools are designed after purpose and user
Organisation
provides the prerequisites for a sustainable work life

- Work load – a balance between requirements and resources
- Clarity and prioritisation of tasks
- Recovery and variation at work

- Introduction, training, tutorial
- Flexibility in working hours and clear boundaries
- Support when working – both from managers and colleagues

Get a part of the workplace's social context