



Det Nationale Forskningscenter
for Arbejdsmiljø

The SeniorWorkingLife study: Exploring psychosocial push and pull factors among senior workers

Annette Meng, Emil Sundstrup, Lars L. Andersen

**ETUI OSH Conference, Bruxelles the 19th and 20th
October 2022**

The project is financed by the Tryg foundation **TrygFonden**

SeniorWorkingLife study

2018, 2020, 2022

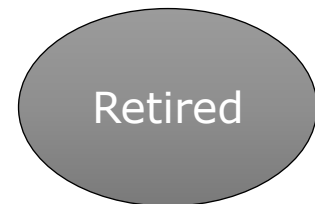
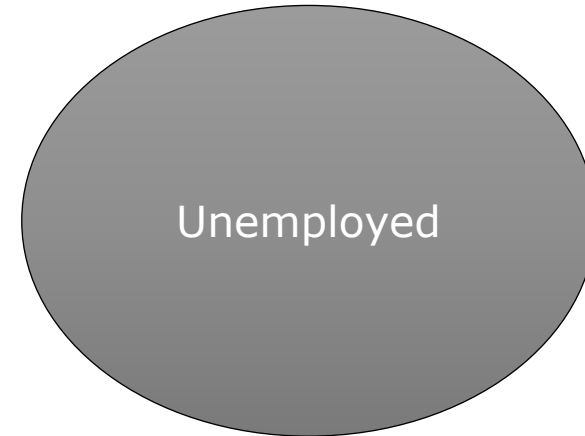
Questionnaire
survey among
employees
(50+)

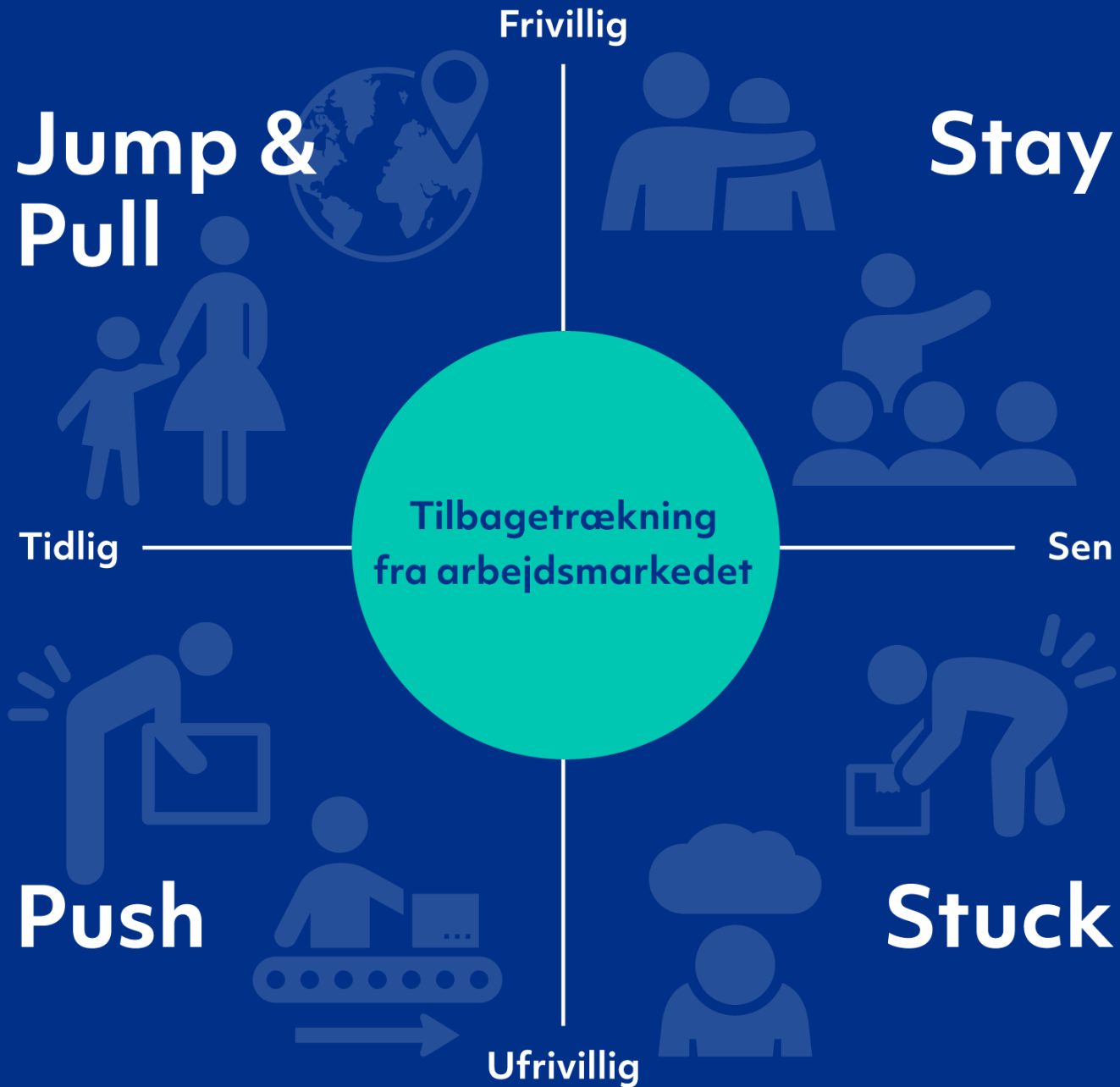
Questionnaire
survey among
companies

Qualitative case
studies

The employee survey

30.000 people aged 50+





Scientific articles reporting results from the study can be found in PubMed by typing “SeniorWorkingLife” in the search field



Expected retirement age

	Before (%)	At (%)	After (%)
Working with symbols	51	26	23
Working with people	56	28	16
Working with production	52	30	18



SeniorArbejdsLiv –

Muligheder og barrierer
for et langt og sundt
arbejdsliv i Danmark

Tidsudvikling fra 2018 til 2020

Lars L. Andersen, Annette Meng, Karen Albertsen, Flemming Pedersen og Emil Sundstrup

Prejudice and age discrimination

- **Psychosocial factors having an adverse effect on the working environment**



Article

What Do the Managers Think of Us? The Older-Worker-Perspective of Managers' Attitudes

Annette Meng *, Emil Sundstrup and Lars L. Andersen

National Research Centre for the Working Environment, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark; ESU@nfa.dk (E.S.); LLA@nfa.dk (L.L.A.)

* Correspondence: ame@nfa.dk; Tel.: +45-3916-5293; Fax: +45-3916-5201

Abstract: Background: Due to demographic changes, the need to prolong working life has become increasingly salient. Paradoxically, stereotyping and discrimination against workers based on their age can limit possibilities for a long working life. A large body of research has investigated attitudes towards older workers; however, less is known about differences across occupational groups as well as gender differences. Aim: To compare perceptions of the managers' perceptions of older workers between employees from mainly seated work and mainly physical work as well as men and women. Method: Data from 11,444 workers aged 50+ from the baseline questionnaire survey in the SeniorWorkingLife study were analyzed. Results: Across all groups, a larger proportion of the respondents indicated that their managers had more positive than negative perceptions of older workers. Respondents from the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) group 5–9 (mainly physical work) and women were less likely to point at both positive and negative perceptions than the ISCO group 14 (mainly seated work) and men, respectively. Conclusions: The results indicate that there are differences between those with mainly physical and mainly seated work as well as gender differences. More research is warranted to explore the nature of these differences and, in particular, attitudes towards older female and male workers, respectively.

Citation: Meng, A.; Sundstrup, E.; Andersen, L.L. What Do the Managers Think of Us? The Older-Worker-Perspective of MANAGERS' Attitudes.

Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 4163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18084163>

Keywords: ageism; social psychology; aging at work; retaining older workers; the SeniorWorkingLife study; age stereotypes

Attitudes explored in the study

Older workers' experience and knowledge is a significant resource for the workplace

Older workers are productive

Older workers are flexible in regards to working hours

Older workers are flexible in regards to work tasks

Older workers are easy to cooperate with

Older workers' qualifications are outdated

Older workers cannot keep up with the speed and development

Older workers are preoccupied with their retirement

Older workers should make room for the young

Older workers create conflicts

Main findings: Employees' perception of managers attitudes

- **Larger proportion report positive than negative attitudes**
- **Less common positive attitudes: “older workers are productive” and “older workers are easy to cooperate with”**
- **Larger proportion of workers with mainly seated work report both positive AND negative attitudes, compared to workers with mainly physical work...**

Prejudice and age discrimination

European Journal of Ageing
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10433-022-00720-3>

ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION



Employee perception of managers' attitudes towards older workers is associated with risk of loss of paid work before state pension age: prospective cohort study with register follow-up

Annette Meng¹ · Emil Sundstrup¹ · Lars L. Andersen¹

Accepted: 30 June 2022
© The Author(s) 2022

Abstract

It is increasingly urgent to retain older workers in the workforce. In the present study, we analysed the prospective associations between employees' perceptions of their managers' attitudes towards older workers, and of having experienced age discrimination in the labour market with the risk of loss of paid work before the state pension age. Questionnaire data from 10,320 currently employed workers aged 50+ on perceptions of managers' attitudes towards older workers and perceived age discrimination were collected at baseline in the SeniorWorkingLife study. Data on labour market affiliation were obtained from national registers at baseline and two-year follow-up. Results show that the perception of negative attitudes was prospectively associated with an increased risk of loss of paid work for three of the five negative attitudes "older workers create conflicts, their qualifications are outdated, and they cannot keep up with the pace and development". Perception of positive attitudes was prospectively associated with a reduced risk of loss of paid work. The perception of age discrimination was prospectively associated with an increased risk of loss of paid work. The results strengthen existing evidence on associations between ageism and labour market attachment, by applying a longitudinal design and including actual change in labour market participation. However, some negative attitudes may be more detrimental to the older workers' labour market participation. Employees' positive perceptions of managers' attitudes reduced the risk. Good relations between employees and managers appear to be important for retaining older workers in the labour market.

Keywords Senior workers · Retention of workers · Social psychology · Occupational psychology · Ageism

Main findings: Risk of loss of paid work at two years follow-up

- Perception of positive attitudes *reduced* risk with 8 – 30%
- Perception of negative attitudes *increased* risk with 17 – 42% (but not all negative attitudes did)
- About 5% report having experienced age discrimination at labour market
- Having experienced age discrimination *increased* risk with 61%

Physical work and stress – the importance of psychosocial factors



International Journal of
*Environmental Research
and Public Health*



Article

The Psychosocial Work Environment and Perceived Stress among Seniors with Physically Demanding Jobs: The SeniorWorkingLife Study

Jonas Vinstrup ^{1,*}, Annette Meng ¹, Emil Sundstrup ¹ and Lars L. Andersen ^{1,2}

¹ National Research Centre for the Working Environment, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark; ame@nfa.dk (A.M.); ESU@nfa.dk (E.S.); LLA@nfa.dk (L.L.A.)

² Sport Sciences, Department of Health Science and Technology, Aalborg University, 9220 Aalborg, Denmark

* Correspondence: jov@nfa.dk; Tel: +45-3916-5200; Fax: +45-3916-5201

Abstract: Background: Poor psychosocial work conditions are known to foster negative health consequences. While the existing literature on this topic focus mainly on white-collar workers, the influence of different aspects of the psychosocial work environment in physically demanding jobs remain understudied. Likewise, senior workers represent a population of the workforce at increased risk of adverse health outcomes and premature exit from the labour market. This study investigates the association between psychosocial work factors and perceived stress among the senior work force. Methods: Utilizing cross-sectional findings, this study reports associations between psychosocial factors (organizational justice, cooperation and collegial support, decision latitude, clarity of tasks, and quality of leadership) and the outcome of perceived stress quantified by Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (CPSS). Currently employed senior workers with physically demanding jobs were included in the analyses (n = 3386). Associations were modeled using general linear models with weights to make the estimates representative. Results: For all individually adjusted psychosocial variables, the category of "good" was consistently associated with lower stress scores compared to the categories of both "moderate" and "poor" (all $p < 0.0001$). Likewise, in the mutually adjusted analysis, the category of "good" was statistically different from "poor" for all included variables, while the category of "moderate" remained different from "poor" for "clarity of tasks", "cooperation and collegial support", and "decision latitude". Conclusions: Among senior workers with physically demanding jobs, poor ratings of organizational factors related to the psychosocial work environment are consistently associated with high stress scores. Blue-collar occupations focusing primarily on physical risk factors are recommended to increase awareness on psychosocial aspects that may be relevant to the local work environment.

Keywords: psychological stress; workload; physical exertion; blue-collar workers; Cohen



Citation: Vinstrup, J.; Meng, A.; Sundstrup, E.; Andersen, L.L. The Psychosocial Work Environment and Perceived Stress among Seniors with Physically Demanding Jobs: The SeniorWorkingLife Study. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **2021**, *18*, 7437. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18147437>

Academic Editor: Raphael M. Herr

Received: 10 May 2021

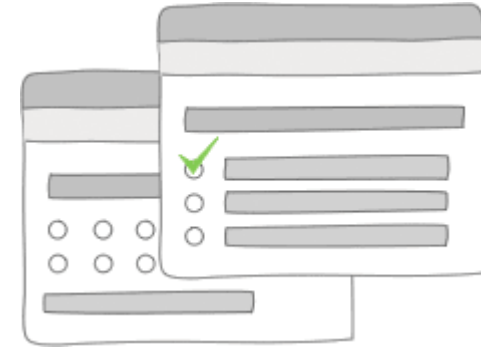
Accepted: 8 July 2021

Published: 12 July 2021

Main findings: Stress among workers with physically demanding jobs

- **Rating of poor or moderate was associated with higher stress score compared to rating of good for all five factors:**
 - **Organisational justice**
 - **Cooperation and collegial support**
 - **Decision latitude**
 - **Clarity of tasks**
 - **Quality of leadership**

What's next?



- **Data collection in Round III**
- **Inclusion of new variables – the use of selection, optimisation, and compensation strategies (SOC)** (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Meng et al., 2021)

SOC model (Baltes & Baltes, 1990)

Selection

- Setting and prioritisation of goals or work tasks

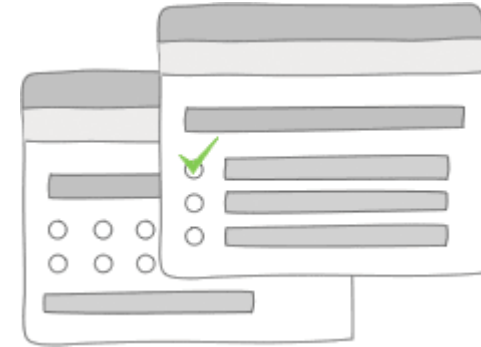
Optimisation

- Allocation of resources and investment of means to reach the goal or complete work tasks

Compensation

- Use of alternative means or external resources to reach the goal or complete work tasks

What's next?



- **Data collection in Round III**
- **Inclusion of new variables – the use of selection, optimisation, and compensation strategies (SOC)** (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Meng et al., 2021)
- **Publication of more results – stay tuned!**

Thank you for your attention

- **Comments or questions?**