Measuring health indicators and work experiences in a salutogenic way. A Swedish developmental work

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Conclusion
Data from an empirical study gives an example on how those with highest education – who ought to have good health according to what is known about social determinants of health – have fewer positive indicators of health. Still they have more positive indicators of work experiences. These complex results indicate the need for holistic health instruments like SHIS and WEMS, when interpreting data in order to improve health among employees in a local workplace health promotion context.

Background
Workplace health promotion activities and measures usually have an ill-health perspective. There is a need for a salutogenic perspective when measuring both indicators of health and work experiences. Such questionnaire instruments have previously been developed at Kristianstad University College and published (1, 2).

Aim
The aim was to present two recently developed instruments measuring health indicators and work experiences in relation to empirical data from hospital settings.

Methods
The SHIS, Salutogenic Health Indicator Scale, consists of nine health related dimensions, constituting two factors, Intrapersonal characteristics and Interactive function.

The WEMS, Work Experience Measurement Scale, consists of six dimensions: management, reorganisation, internal work experience, time experience, autonomy and supportive working conditions.

Both instruments are built from theoretical complexity. Still they are short, easy to handle and have demonstrated good psychometric properties.

The empirical data for SHIS and WEMS emanates from two Swedish hospital studies among 483 and 444 health care staff respectively (response rate 61% and 73%). Correlation is presented as Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient, rs.

Definition
Self-rated health is referred to here as the person’s own evaluation of his/her global health on a five-graded scale.

References:
2) Nilsson P, Bringsén Å, Andersson HI, Ejlertsson G. Development and Quality analysis of the Work Experience Measurement Scale (WEMS). WORK (accepted)

Results
SHIS, and also WEMS, was related to self-rated health, rs = 0.57 and rs = 0.33, respectively. SHIS was higher – indicating better health – among nurses and assistant nurses compared to physicians. According to WEMS, physicians stated more time pressure, more autonomy, and a more positive view on reorganisation compared to nurses and assistant nurses.

Principles to measure indicators of health

The salutogenic measure

Example on opposite

Felt tired
Felt well
Sleep well
Been functioning well when in contact with other people

Felt tired, exhausted
Felt well
Sleeped well
Been functioning poorly when in contact with other people

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More information on SHIS and WEMS – in Swedish – can be found at www.hkr.se/shis-wems