

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 fac-

tors, 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, r_s .

Principles to measure indicators of health

The pathogenic measure
Example on symptoms

Dysphoria Yes No

General fatigue Yes No

Difficulty in relaxing Yes No

Sleeping disturbance Yes No

The salutogenic measure
Example on opposites

Felt brisk Felt tired, exhausted

Felt well Felt ill

Slept well Had problems sleeping

Been functioning well when in contact with other people Been functioning poorly when in contact with other people

Results

SHIS, and also *WEMS*, was related to self-rated health, $r_s = 0.57$ and $r_s = 0.33$, 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.

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:

- 1) Bringsén Å, Andersson HI, Ejlertsson G. Development and quality analysis of the Salutogenic Health Indicator Scale (SHIS). *Scand J Publ Health* 2009; 37: 13-9
- 2) Nilsson P, Bringsén Å, Andersson HI, Ejlertsson G. Development and Quality analysis of the Work Experience Measurement Scale (WEMS). *WORK* (accepted)