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GLOBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: THE CIRCUMPOLAR PERSPECTIVE

Work-related overcommitment: Is it a state or a trait? – Results from the Swedish WOLF-study

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Exhibit hall (Dena'ina Center)

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INTRODUCTION: In globally orientated working world stress is of rising importance as a health risk. ERI (effort-reward-imbalance) is a well-tested work-related stress model with three components: While an imbalance between its extrinsic components 'efforts' and 'rewards' leads to strain reactions 'work-related overcommitment' (WOC) has been described as a certain personal characteristic with a set of attitudes, behaviors and emotions reflecting excessive striving combined with a strong desire for approval. However, one question concerning WOC has not been well addressed in the literature: Is WOC a trait alone or prone to a changing working environment?

METHODS: In this exploratory longitudinal data analysis of the prospective WOLF (WOrk, Lipids, Fibrinogen) cohort study 2940 employees were analyzed with multiple linear regression analysis. A change of WOC index or his subscales was regressed against a change of occupational decision latitude, extra work or work stress measured by an ERI proxy five years later. Covariates adjusted for were age, sex and education. The fully conditional specification algorithm was used for imputation of missing values.

RESULTS: Work stress was the only work-related predictor significantly associated with the total WOC index ($\beta=7.07$ (95%-CI: 4.91;9.25) and its subscales 'need for approval' ($\beta= 1.14$ (95%-CI: 0.48;1.80), 'disproportional irritability' ($\beta= 1.93$ (95%-CI: 1.26;2.61) and 'inability to withdraw from work' ($\beta= 3.26$ (95%-CI: 2.36;4.16) while 'competitiveness' showed a tendency for significance, only in the fully adjusted model.

CONCLUSIONS: While WOC was insensitive to changes in decision latitude and extra work it was highly associated with changes in work stress. Health promotion measures reducing work stress might be especially worthwhile for employees prone to WOC. Further investigations are needed to prove our results.

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