



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

Organizational-level risk and health-promoting factors within the healthcare sector

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Risk- och friskfaktorer
i hälso- och sjukvården
– organisatoriska faktorer av betydelse
för medarbetarnas hälsa

Risk and health-promoting
factors within the health
care sector –
organisational factors of
importance to the health
of employees

<https://mynak.se/publikationer/>
<https://sawee.se/publications/>

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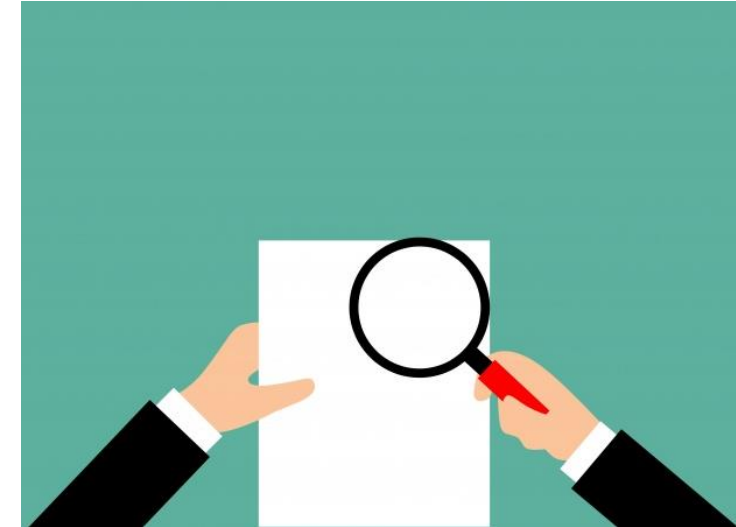
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AIM

- To obtain a comprehensive overview of Nordic research on the work environment and health of healthcare personnel, and thereby identify risk- and health-promoting factors on an organisational level.
- The goal is that the results of this review should be able to provide support in work environment work and in work to practically prevent ill health and promote well-being in healthcare personnel

Methods

- Design:
 - Systematic search and review
- Inclusion:
 - Healthcare professionals in the Nordic region
 - Phenomenon of interest
 - Quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods designs
 - Published between 2016 – 3 January 2023
- Exclusion:
 - Covid-19



Levels in the systematic work environment management

Individual level

improve the physical or mental health of individuals, often involving lifestyle activities

Group level

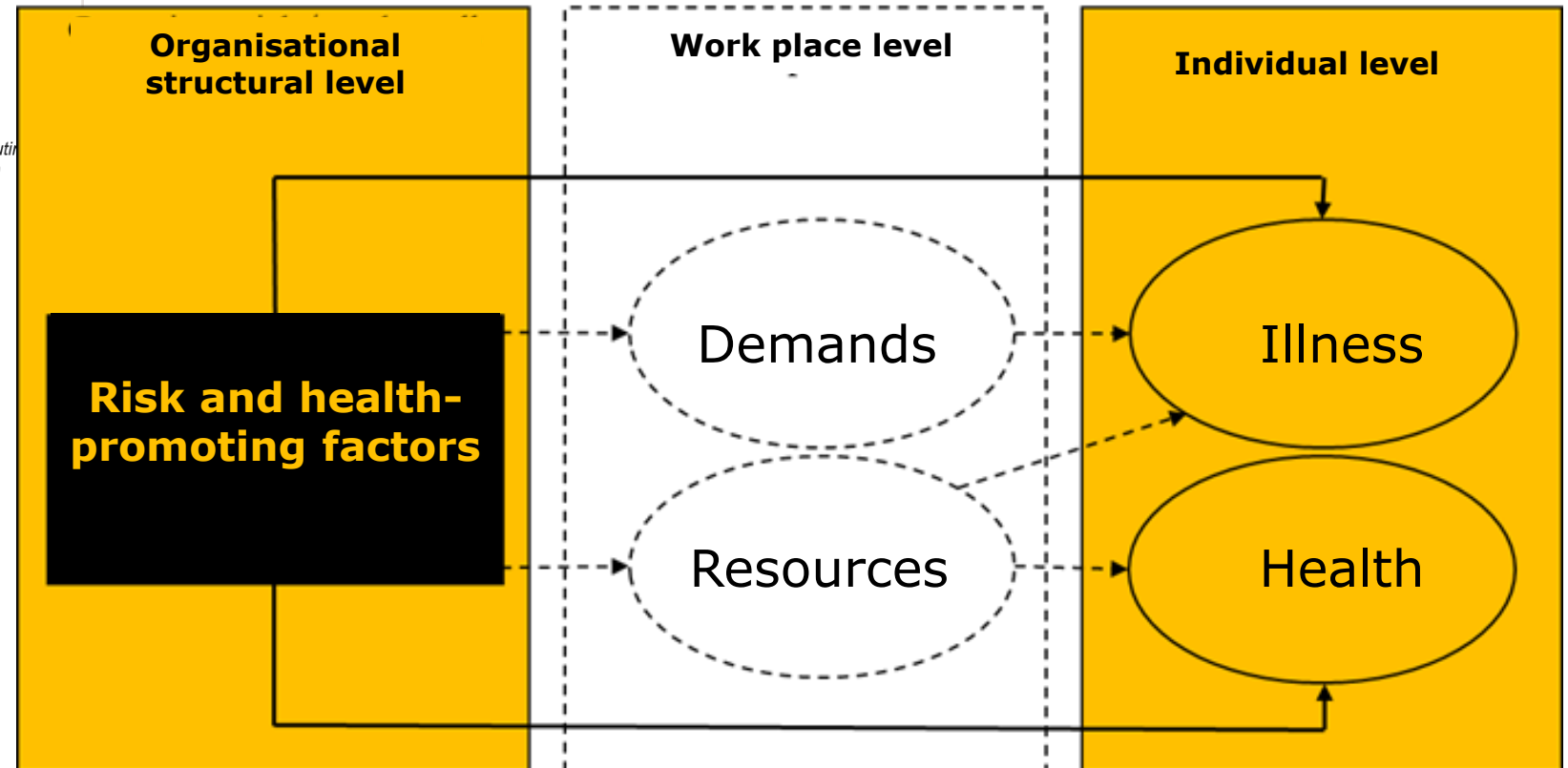
improve the social interaction between individuals at the workplace

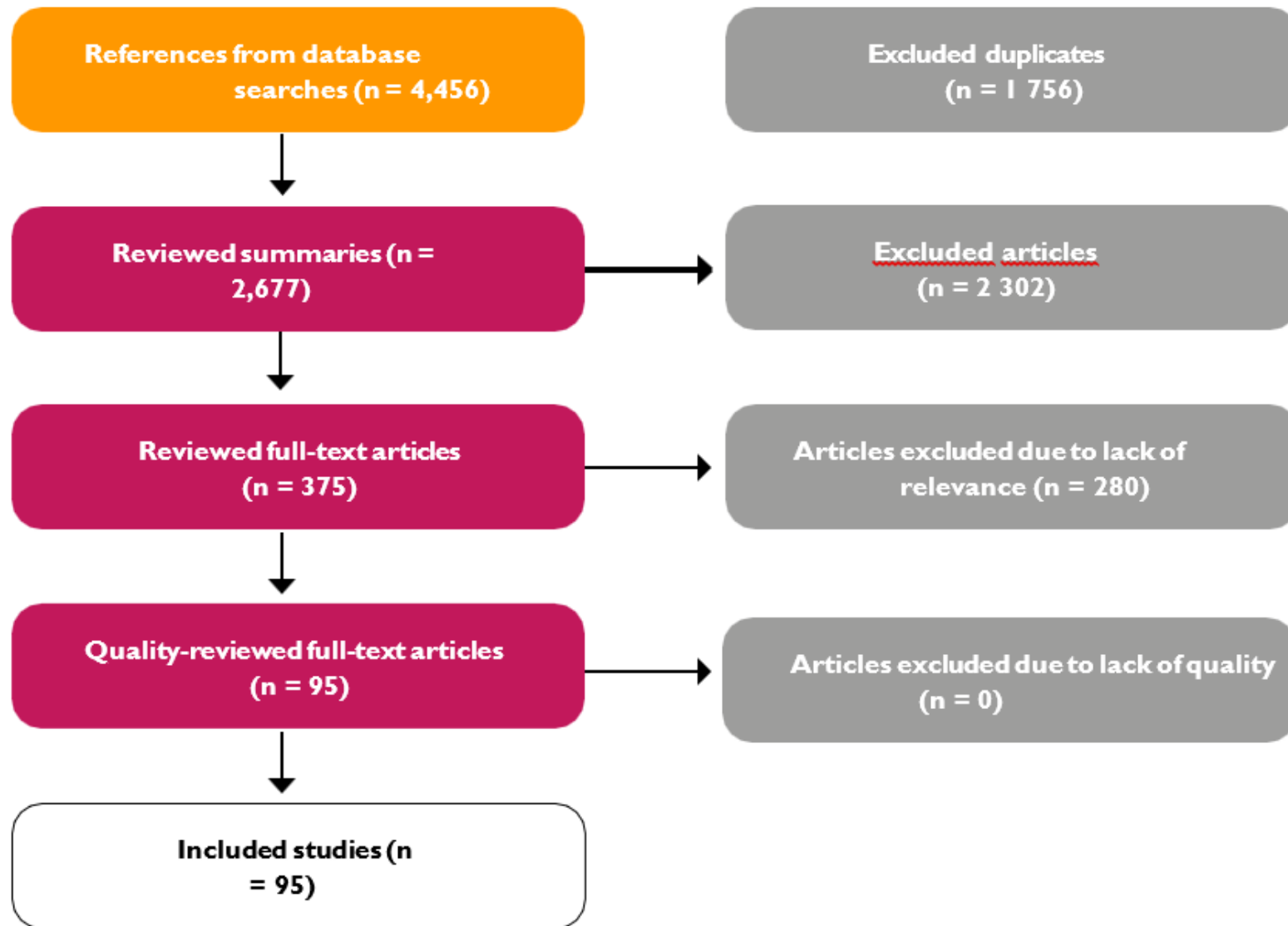
Organisational level

Workplace level

Structural level

ensure that structures, policies, and routines designed to benefit occupational health





Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT)

23% (17 of 75 with quantitative design) had limitations regarding quality assessment (representativity, low response rate, non-random samples)

Analyses and results

- Longitudinal design in 34 studies (36%)
- Cross-sectional design in 34 studies (36%)
- 20 qualitative studies (21%)

- 28 studies (29%) with outcomes related to health and well-being (work ability, motivation, commitment)
- 67 studies (71%) with outcomes related to ill-health and disease (cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, mental illness, burnout, sick leave)

Professions included

- Mixed professions, 40 studies
- Nurses, 40 studies
- Physicians, 9 studies

Five main categories

Distribution of
working time
schedules
(39 papers)

Design of
operations and
work methods
(27 papers)

Ergonomic
preconditions
(19 papers)

Terms of
employment and
personnel policy
(13 papers)

Organisation's
ethical
environment
(10 papers)

Distribution of working time schedules

- Risks associated with:
 - shift work in general
 - distribution of working hours that implies a short rest between the shifts or leads to long workdays or weeks (*quick returns*)
 - distribution of working hours which results in continual or long-term night shifts.
- Health-promoting factors:
 - the opportunity for employees to be able to influence how working time is distributed



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Design of operations and work methods

- Risks associated with:
 - distribution of work and staffing that meant working alone
 - having to perform tasks that could not be considered part of the job description
- Health-promoting factors:
 - cooperation between professions and across hierarchical boundaries, as well as being involved in quality development work
 - a higher management that sees the employees and be present, and that they were perceived by the employees to understand their needs



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Ergonomic preconditions

- Risks associated with:
 - a high workload that has not been adjusted to the workers using adapted working methods or aids.
- Health-promoting factors:
 - design of premises
- Whether electronic information and communication systems are perceived as positive or negative depends on the extent to which they facilitate work and the extent to which the organisation provides support for them to do so.



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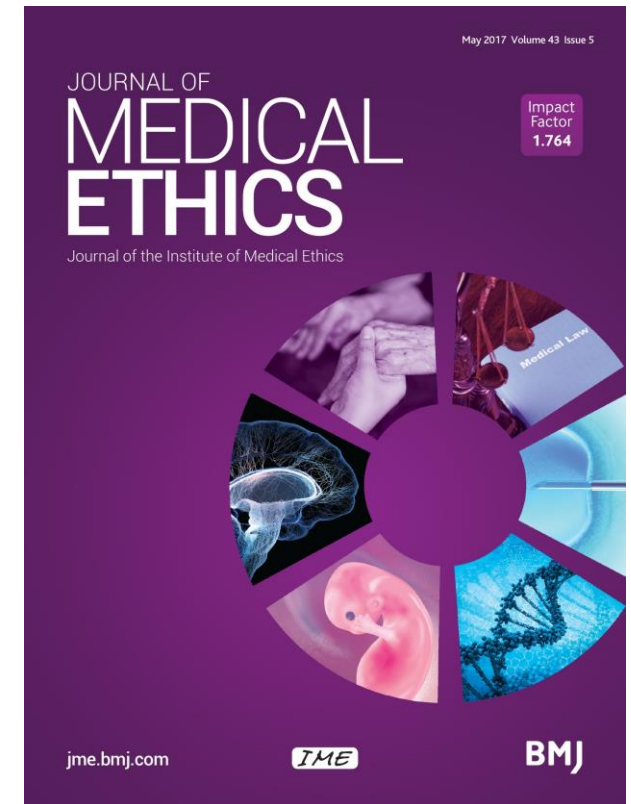
Terms of employment and personnel policy

- Risks associated with:
 - short employment contracts
 - lack of opportunities to adapt the work if necessary
- Health-promoting factors:
 - job security
 - monetary rewards

Only 13 studies are included in the category and it is a substantial heterogeneity between studies which makes it difficult to summarize the results.

Organization's ethical environment

- Risks associated with:
 - insufficient staffing and lack of time which means having to work in a way that conflicts with personal or professional values or ethical principles
- Health-promoting factors:
 - consensus between employees and the organization regarding ethical principles
 - support from management in ethical matters
 - access to resources that enable staff to carry out their work in accordance with personal or professional ethical principles.



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Two general patterns across all categories

Distribution of
working time
schedules

Design of
operations and
work methods

Ergonomic
preconditions

Terms of
employment and
personnel policy

Organisation's
ethical
environment

The way in which the organisation governs, allocates and provides resources: stated values and priorities

What the organization communicates to its employees; structural conditions for meaningful work

Conclusions

- There are opportunities at the organisational level to not only manage but **eliminate risks** in the work environment, here is also an opportunity to **create the conditions** for a health-promoting work environment.
- In the Nordic countries, it is still relatively uncommon to focus on the organisational level in relation to employees' health and illness. **If the work environment for healthcare professionals is to be improved, the organisational level must be emphasised.**

Thank you!

Categories within health-related risk and health-promoting factors at the organisational level	Employer's goals, needs and mission	Employees' goals, needs and mission
Distribution of working time schedules	Are there enough staff in place to meet society's need for health care?	Do staffing and working hours enable employees to perform their work with a level of quality that accords with their fundamental ethical principles? Are working hours distributed in a way that does not risk illness?
Design of operations and work methods	Is the work structured in a way that delivers effective care?	Is the work structured in a way that allows management to appreciate the contributions of employees? Is the work structured in a way that ensures employees can do their jobs in a manner in keeping with their fundamental ethical principles?
Ergonomic preconditions	Do work premises and assistive devices make it possible to provide effective care?	Are work premises and aids accessible and designed in ways that make it easier for employees to perform high-quality work? Are work premises and aids accessible and designed in ways that reduce the employees' workload?
Terms of employment and personnel policy	Do the terms and conditions of employment allow the organisation's need for flexibility to be met? Do the terms and conditions of employment and available support for employees ensure that the organisation can deliver the care that society needs?	Do the terms and conditions of employment and available support mean that employees can feel secure (both financially and in terms of competence) and valued?
The organisation's ethical environment	Do the organisation's values and priorities allow for the efficient and safe provision of care?	Does the organisation offer support in ethical issues and dilemmas in a way that minimises the burden on employees and enables them to perform their work without value conflicts?

Practical way forward

1. Identify existing risk and health-promoting factors on an organisational level within the organisation.
2. Analyse and prioritise what needs to be addressed. Both analysis and prioritisation should be conducted in collaboration between management and employees.
3. Look for opportunities to make health and safety improvements on an organisational level that not only reduce risk factors but also offer value. This refers to aspects that give organisations and employees the right conditions to perform work characterised by commitment and quality, with room for recovery and reflection. It may be necessary to address risk factors – but a focus on health-promoting factors is also needed to ensure a good work environment and satisfactory skills supply.

Practical way forward

4. Investigate whether new risk and health-promoting factors are added by changes at the organisational level, for example, the introduction of new tasks, systems, procedures, etc. This applies even if the purpose of the change is to address the shortcomings of prevailing conditions.
5. When making decisions that jeopardise employees' sense of being able to work effectively, consider whether there might be another way to achieve the same goal.
6. Follow up on whether the measures have had the intended effect.