

Women's work environment, health and ergonomics

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1. Introduction

The Swedish Work Environment Authority has been assigned by the Swedish Government to develop and implement directed initiatives aimed at preventing women from being excluded from working life because of work-related problems. The program called "women's work environment", was organized in two projects, good physical ergonomics is one of the aims of the assignment.

2. Objectives

This project is aimed at preventing ill health and premature exit from the labour market because of musculoskeletal disorders among women.

The project consists of three parts:

- Knowledge acquisition and distribution
- Methodological and professional development and
- Supervision

3. Methods

In order to gain an understanding of the assignment the project started with a current status examination. By the time of the conference knowledge compilations have been presented, learning seminars have been conducted and methods have been introduced to inspectors and employers by implementing them during inspections. The entire program called "Women's work environment" has been evaluated continuously under supervision of researchers. The evaluation was integrated with the routine program operations and aiming to involve all stakeholders and not just evaluation experts. Results from research have continuously been discussed with project management. After two and a half years we are now summarizing the results and implement our experiences into our ordinary organization in order to ensure the sustainability of lessons learned. Experiences of inspectors are collected by focus group interviews and computer surveys.

4. Results

Presently the results of the surveys are not yet put together, 250 inspectors have been involved during three years. We have inspected 2000 workplaces with focus on ergonomics prevention of MSDs by using tools to assess risks of developing musculoskeletal complaints. At the same time we have had a dialogue about the conditions for women's and men's health at work.

At the NES 2014 conference we will present the impact of the project within our organisation and reflect about our experiences so far.