

International Metalworkers' Federation

Stress and Burnout

A growing Problem for Non-Manual Workers



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INTRODUCTION

Everybody knows what stress is all about. It is part of life and perhaps, to some extent, necessary at work and outside work. Some people are even more productive and creative when they work under stress. But if stress is intense and continuous, then it becomes a negative phenomenon leading to physical illness and psychological disorders.

The European Union has done some valuable research work on stress which shows that there seems to be differences between north and south. Whereas the labour force in southern Europe reports more extensive problems in the physical and ergonomic work environment, the countries in northern Europe report far higher stress levels.

It is true that the way work is organised changes a great deal when one moves from North to South and there is a less hierarchical tradition of work organisation in the North. There are also different welfare systems, different types of legislation and health care.

This being said, there are also a number of common threads which link the high prevalence of stress and burnout to changes taking place in the labour market, due partly to the effects of economic globalisation. And economic globalisation affects all workers alike.

The globalisation of economies has prompted significant modifications in the nature of work and brought workers under ever-increasing pressure. People in a wide range of occupations have to cope with greater uncertainty, more intense demands for increased productivity, flexibility and employability.

Restructuring, lean production, subcontracting and outsourcing reduce the number of jobs and put higher requirements on individual workers, in terms of both quality and quantity of production. Workers have to produce more, faster and at any time. With their competitive requirements, companies today have become real stress-producing factories. It is no longer machines which break down. It is the workers themselves.

So far, stress at work has been mostly considered in the context of the industrialised countries. But there is growing evidence, although scattered and incomplete, that stress is affecting workers in developing countries as well.

Stress is certainly not an exclusively white-collar workers' issue. For many years, burnout has been considered as an occupational hazard, which occurred first and foremost in people-oriented professions, such as human services, education and health care. Today it affects all professions and all categories of workers. Among these, non-manual workers are particularly exposed to the new health-damaging trends in the world of work.

The incursion of information technology is probably not extraneous to this development. New technology and computer science are imposing their rhythm on daily life. New technologies have made the borderline between work and private life more and more blurred. Working schedules are no longer what they were yesterday. In many enterprises, for certain categories of employees, time is becoming less relevant. What matters is the carrying out of projects and the results. Whether people have to work overtime to achieve these results is not management's concern.

What is the trade union response to stress and how can it be translated into practical policy-making? Have programmes been developed to help workers, has legislation been passed? What can and what should be done?

In many countries, the level of public awareness and the awareness among workers is low. In Sweden, the level is high and stress is recognised as an occupational disease. It is not so in France or Switzerland.

How can unions increase member awareness and knowledge regarding the causes of occupational stress and its impact on health? How do they respond to it?

Should the problem be solved individually or collectively? Should stress and burnout enter the union bargaining agenda? If so, how can unions negotiate protective and preventive collective bargaining language with employers? How can they negotiate concrete action, when there is a lack of laws, directives and white papers on this subject?

How can unions make employers aware of the problem and open to change?

Stress has a high cost – a high human cost but also a high financial cost. A number of studies show that the costs of stress to society are increasing continuously. This cost factor is already a powerful enough reason for governments and employers to act and take effective steps to improve the situation. Stress has detrimental effects not only on workers' health but also on the performance of enterprises. It lessens the workers' commitment to their work, and this is a message that employers should be able to understand.

Addressing the negative consequences of changes in the nature of work has always been a key function of industrial relations. Constantly changing organisation of work and its corollary stress and burnout are challenges for organised workers and the trade unions. Perhaps new attitudes and strategies are needed to tackle this new area of worker protection.

The present report regroups the presentations made at the IMF/SIF Seminar on "Stress and burnout – A growing problem for non-manual workers", which took place from April 23-25, 2001 near Stockholm in Sweden. It is hoped that this material can be used by unions for information and educational purposes with a view to raising awareness about this issue among their membership and giving it an international perspective.

Part one

Stress and Burnout

Overview and general Trends

Development of Stress and Burnout in the 90s

By Birgitta Rolander, Alecta¹

Alecta's purpose is to develop, make available and manage pension plans that have been negotiated collectively. The core business consists of the ITP occupational pension which is based on a collective bargaining agreement between *Föreningen Svenskt Näringsliv* (The Swedish Business Association) and *Privattjänstemannakartellen, PTK* (The Cartel for Private Sector Staff). Alecta is the largest occupational pensions company in Sweden, managing capital funds worth 33 billion USD.

In recent years, Alecta has developed comprehensive skills in the area of health and rehabilitation. Alecta has a staff of 600 people who provide services to 28,000 companies, and administer insurances for 1.4 million current and former employees in the private sector. Its annual premium income amounts to 1.5 billion USD.

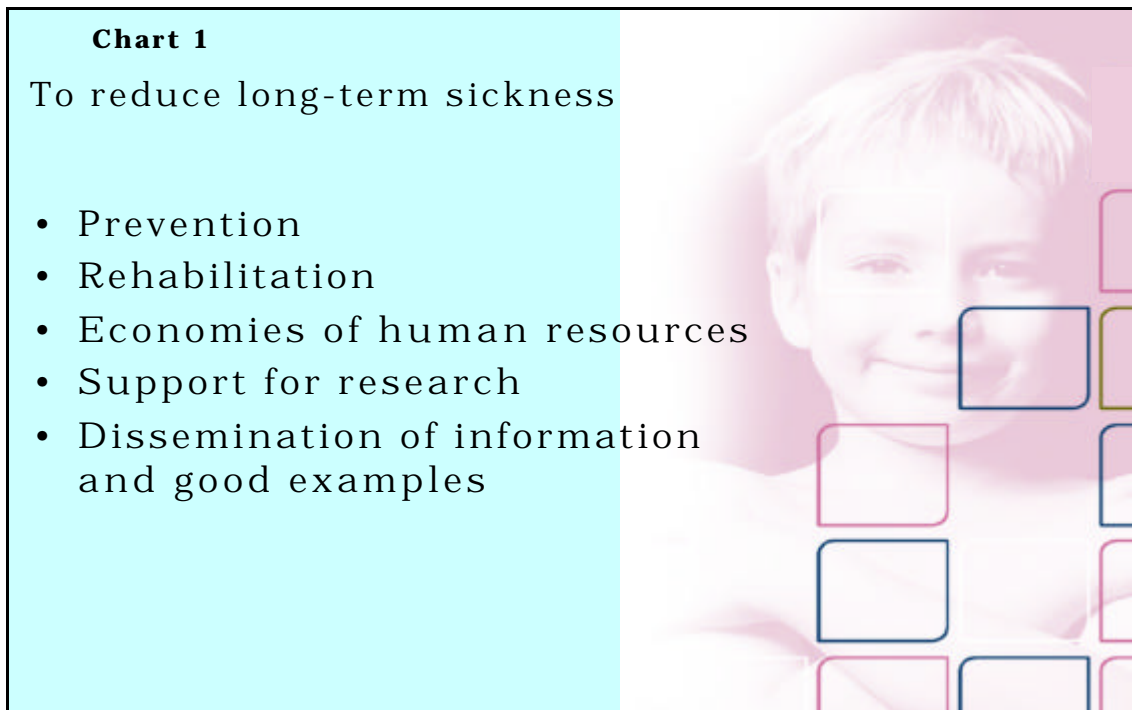


Chart 1

To reduce long-term sickness

- Prevention
- Rehabilitation
- Economies of human resources
- Support for research
- Dissemination of information and good examples

¹ Alecta is the new name of a former insurance company, previously known as the SPP Mutual Insurance Company - Försäkringsbolaget SPP, ömsesidigt, whose name was changed in February 2001.

One of Alecta's business areas is called Health and Welfare. As early as the 1950s, Alecta planned to engage in preventive health work and rehabilitation. A number of selective measures were introduced to resolve a variety of cases of illnesses by taking a flexible, unconventional approach.

The same spirit exists today, although it is now more organised. Since 1993, a number of rehabilitation projects have been under way which decided Alecta to launch their new Health and Welfare business area on 1 January 1997.

Two main roles:

- The business area is responsible for developing Alecta's medical insurance operations. Alecta's aim is to work proactively with prevention and rehabilitation to cut down lengthy sick leave periods and reduce the number of cases of early retirement due to ill-health among policy holders. Alecta's ITP insurance - which includes sickness insurance - has some 600,000 policy holders, of whom 23,000 have taken early retirement or are on sickness benefit. Alecta is Sweden's second largest sickness insurance company. Thanks to the amount of policies handled, Alecta hopes and believes that its commitment will make a contribution to society.
- To support business customers and policy holders, Alecta also ensures that new services are developed in the area of health and welfare.

Knowledge and cooperation are the keywords to help us get there. Here are some examples of what Alecta is doing:

- Support and initiate research that can help to cut down long periods of sick leave and increase people's capacity to work. The aim is to find out what makes people healthy; what makes them ill and what can be done in terms of prevention and rehabilitation.

Undertake research in collaboration with Karolinska Institutet, Handelshögskolan (School of Economics) in Stockholm and Uppsala University. Some of the research is carried out together with AFA sickness insurance or with Arbetslivsinstitutet (the Working Life Institute).

- Monitor news, debates, changes in legislation and developments in the field.
- Disseminate information through seminars and conferences.
- Work with the Social Security agency and with employers on matters relating to rehabilitation.
- Organise projects together with trade unions, employers' organisations and other stakeholders, such as Prevent (former joint Industrial Safety Council).

- Develop tools for analyses and calculations on personnel and health economics offered to companies as early ways to detect cases of illness and risk.
- In Summer 1998, Alecta launched a new health and safety instrument - *Sambandet* (The Connection), directed at companies and organisations within both the private and public sectors. This instrument also provides the opportunity of applying for the quality award *Sambandet*.
- Build networks for health and safety and occupational health consultants, who operate in association with Alecta, and one for people in companies who work actively with the *Samband* tool.

The chart below illustrates the development of new cases of illness reported to Alecta. The base year is 1997 and therefore indexed as 100. The interpretation is as follows: the 1998 index was 115, which indicates a 15% increase from 1997 to 1998. The increase from 1997 to 1999 was 40% (the 1999 index was 140) and the increase from 1998 to 1999 was 23% ($100 \times [140/115 - 1]$). The columns show the proportion of illnesses diagnosed as depression, burnout, and reaction to severe stress for each year.

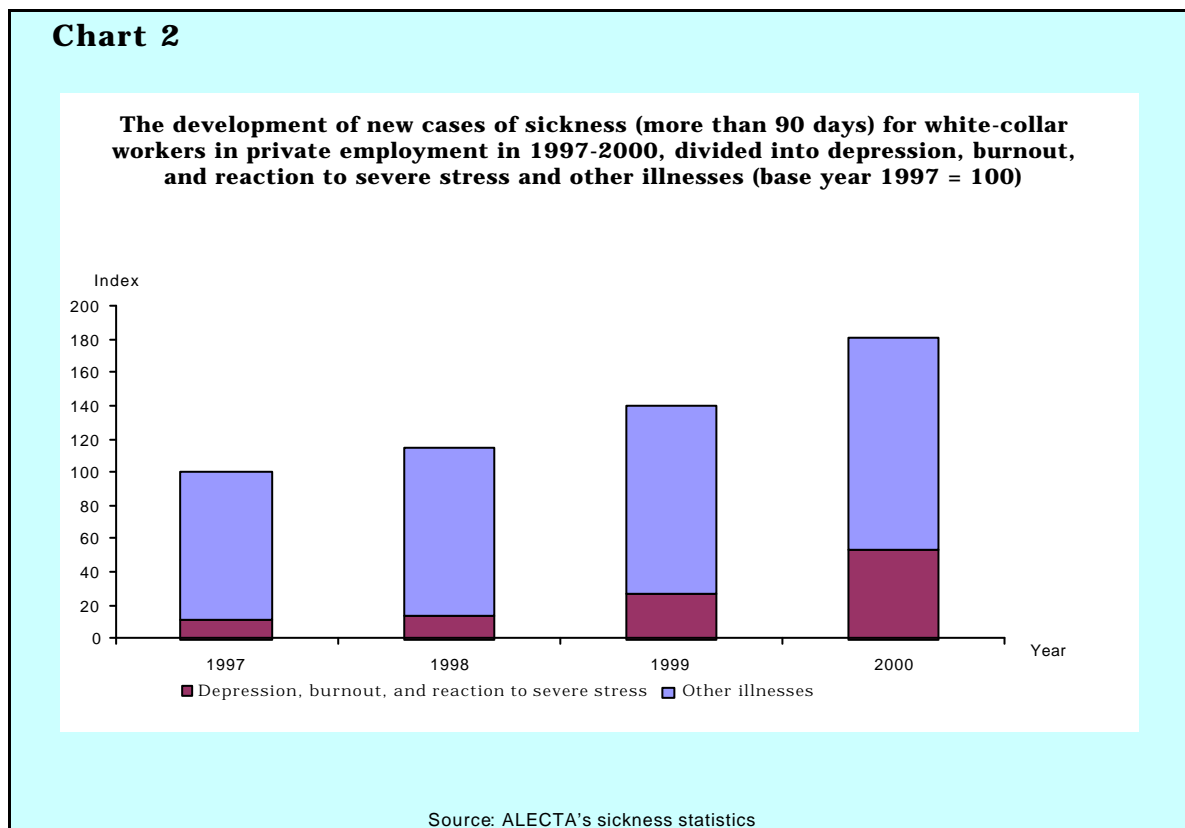


Chart 3 shows the development of the five most common diagnoses among new cases of illness reported to Alecta. The rapid increase in the number of cases of depression, burnout and reaction to severe stress is clear, particularly during 2000. Although not as great, there was an increase in the diagnoses of neck/shoulder/arm pain and back pain.

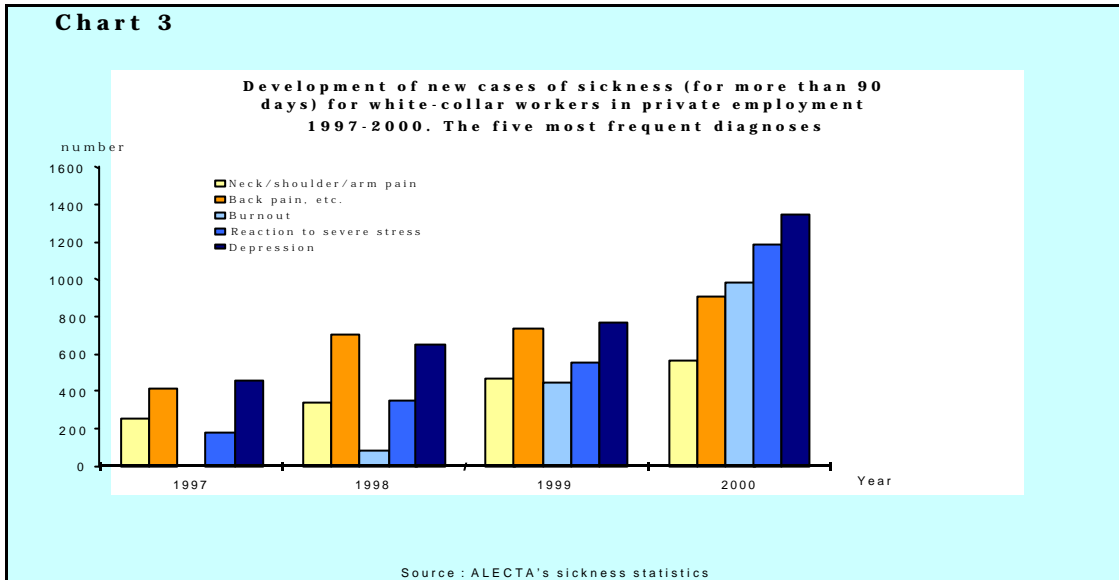
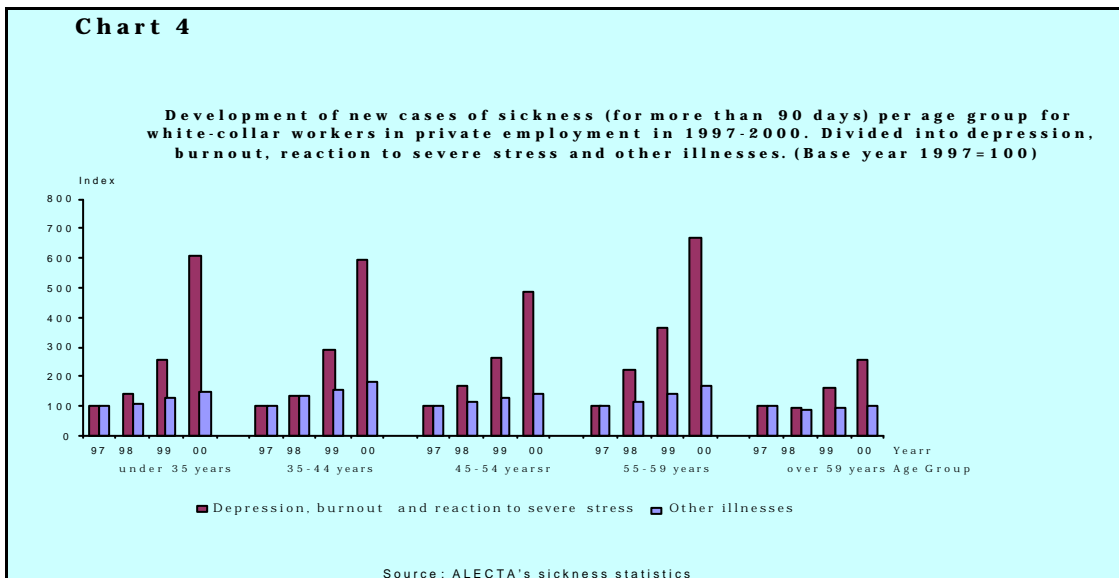
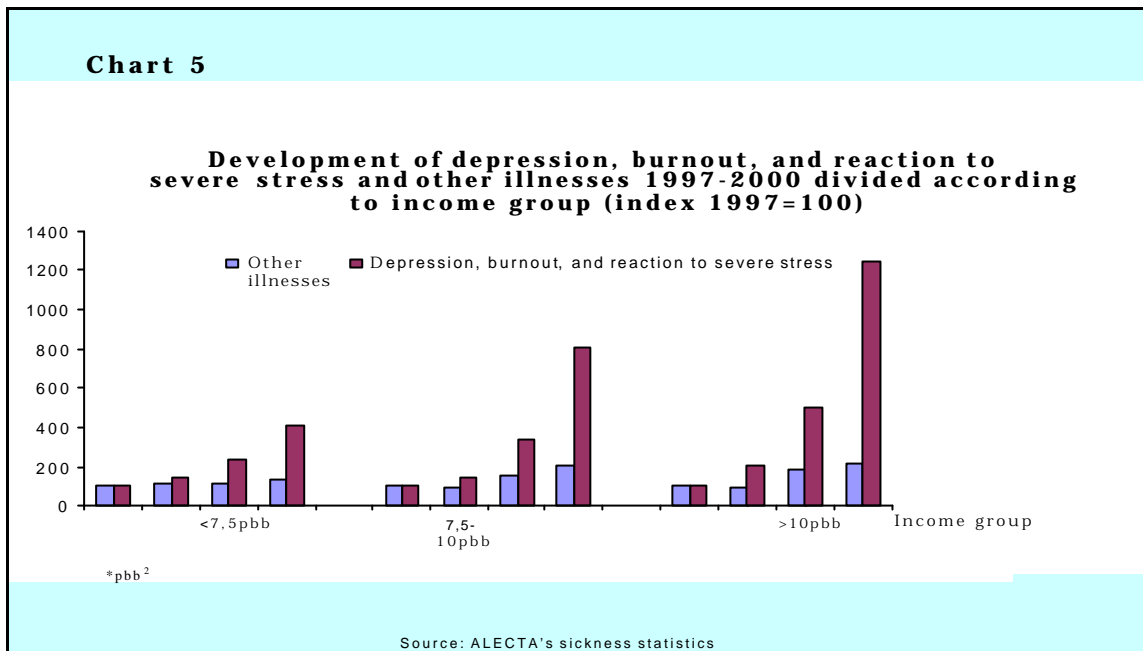


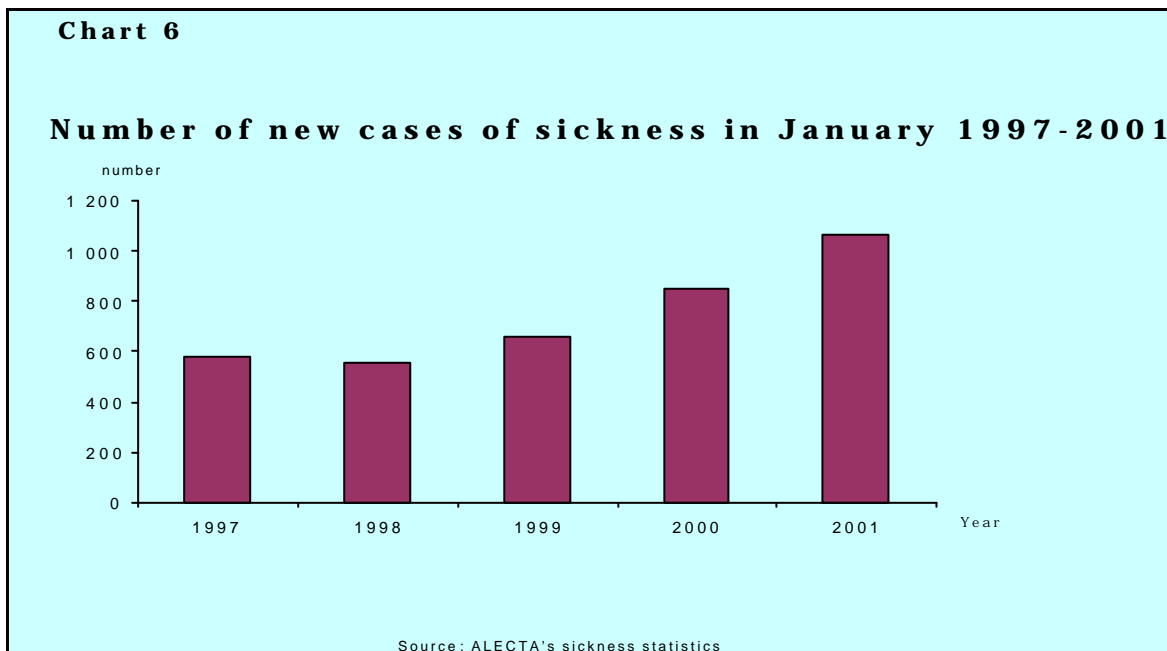
Chart 4 represents the development of the number of new cases of illness reported as diagnoses of depression, burnout and reaction to severe stress, and all other diagnoses within different age groups. The base year is 1997 (1997=100). It is therefore not possible to find out which age group includes the largest number of cases, only the percentage increase within each age group.



As chart 4, but by different income groups



The number of notifications of new cases of illness in January for the years 1997-2001. Each item is represented by one month only, but the picture could look rather different if a different month had been chosen.



² Level of income compensation fixed by the Government and to be paid by the employer in case of work-related disease

In chart 7 the figure shows the increase in the total number of cases of illness reported as depression, burnout and reaction to severe stress, and the other diagnoses for January 2000 and January 2001. The same comment as above applies here.

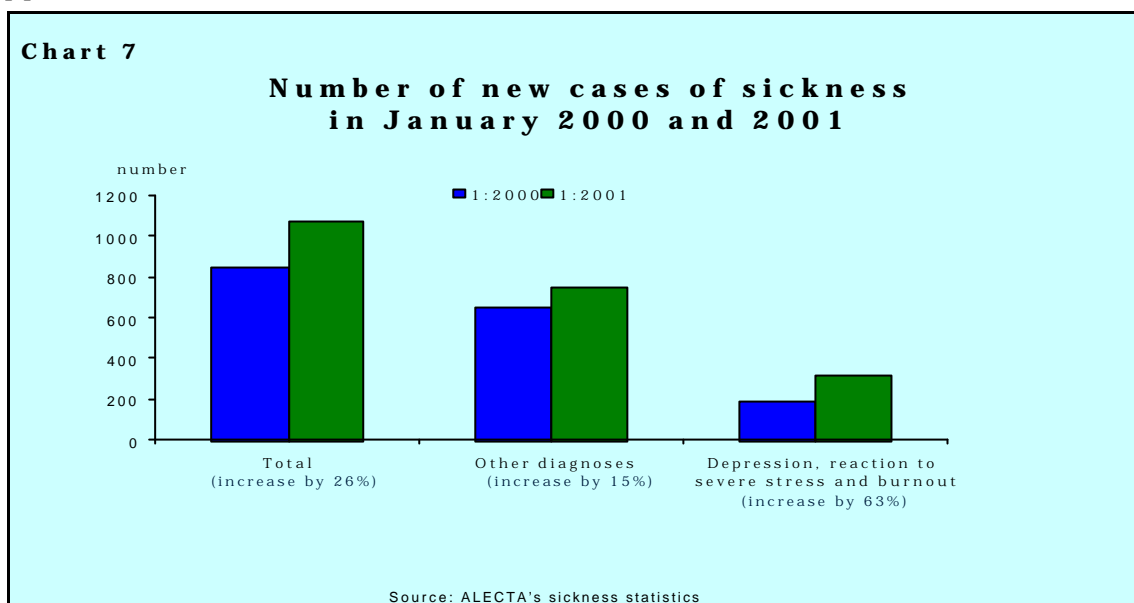


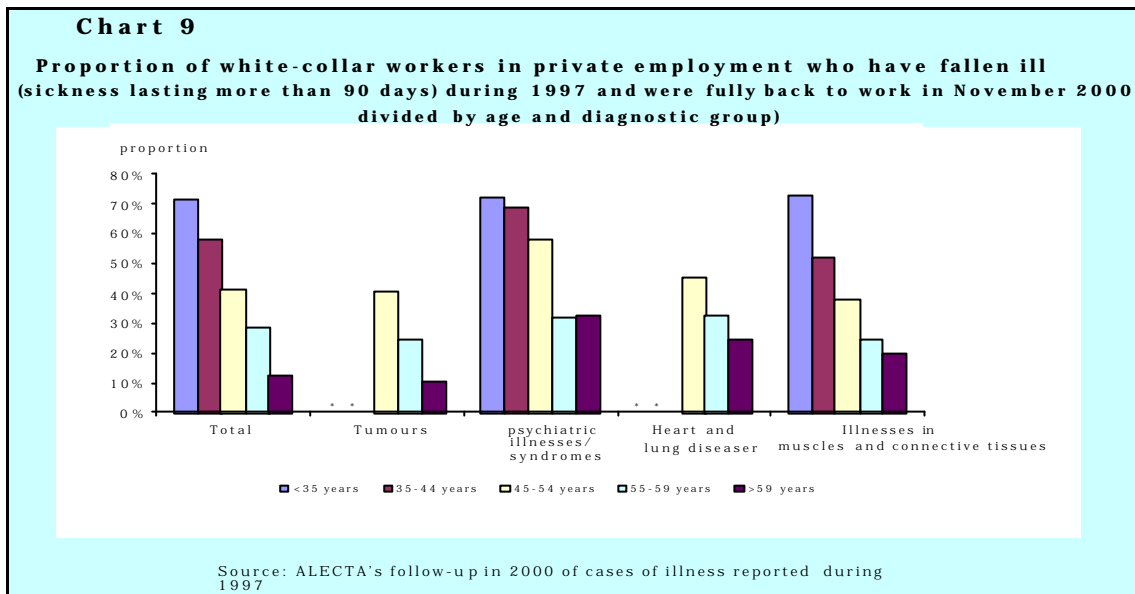
Chart 8 shows the share of the most common diagnoses in the illness cases reported in 1999, 2000 and the first quarter of 2001. Depression and reaction to severe stress show a constant increase from year to year. The proportion of burnout cases fell. There could be several explanations for this. One is that only the first three months of 2001 have been reported, another is that media interest in this diagnosis may have led to these cases of illness being given another stress label. Pain diagnoses have a decreasing share of cases, but as we saw on page 4, their total is increasing. The reason their proportion is falling is that the increase is not as large as the total increase.

Chart 8

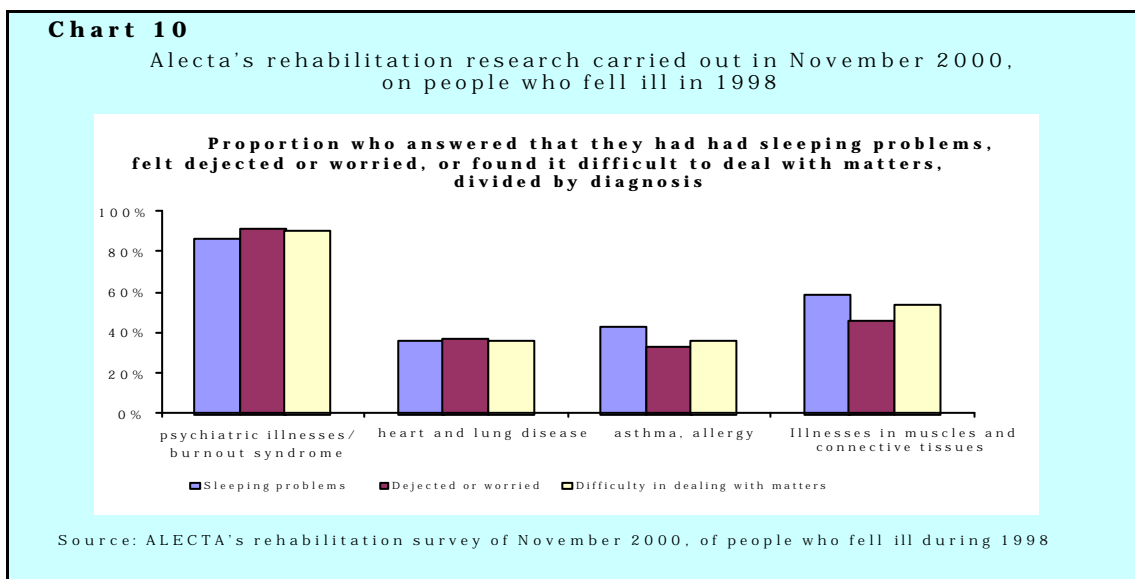
The most frequent diagnoses in 1999, 2000 and first quarter 2001					
1999 Proportion		2000 Proportion		2001 Proportion	
Depression	8%	Depression	11%	Stress reaction*	14%
Back pain	8%	Stress reaction*	9%	Depression	12%
Stress reaction*	6%	Burnout	8%	Burnout	6%
Neck/shoulder-arm pain	5%	Back pain, etc.	7%	Back pain, etc.	5%
Burnout	5%	Neck/shoulder-arm pain	5%	Neck-shoulder-arm pain	4%
Muscular pain	4%	General muscular pain	3%	General muscular pain	3%

*Reaction to severe stress

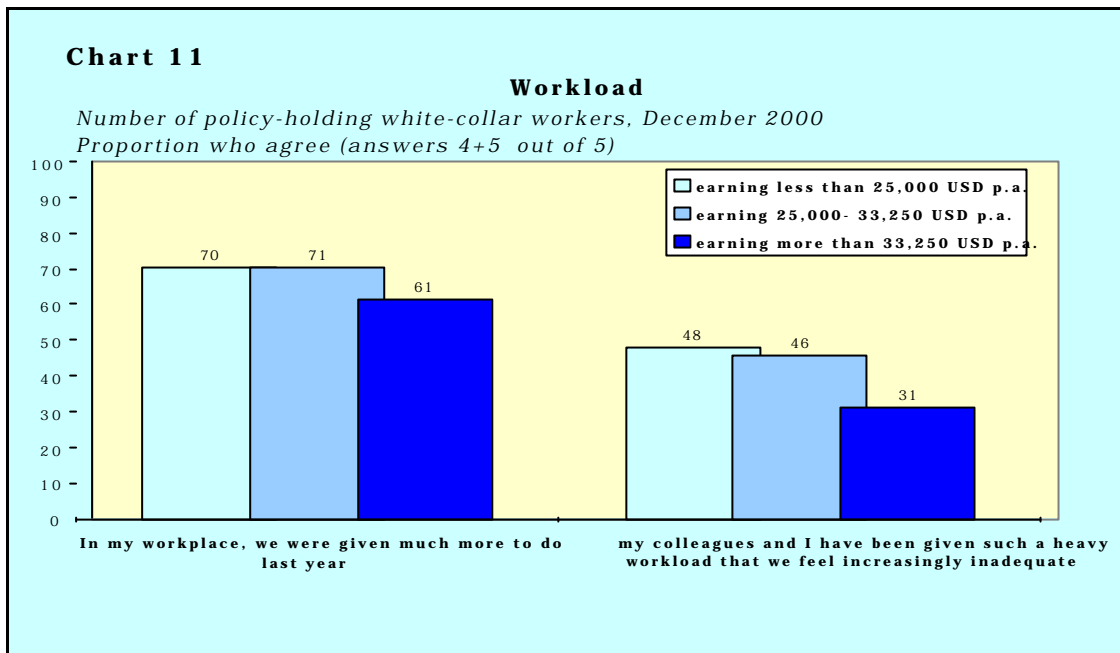
Chart 9 illustrates the proportion of people who have resumed full-time work after being on sick leave for more than 90 days in different age and diagnostic groups. Some age and diagnostic groups are not included, as the number of cases was insufficient to produce statistically significant results. The younger age groups have the highest number of people back at work. The highest proportion of people who returned to work was in the diagnostic group psychiatric illnesses/syndromes.



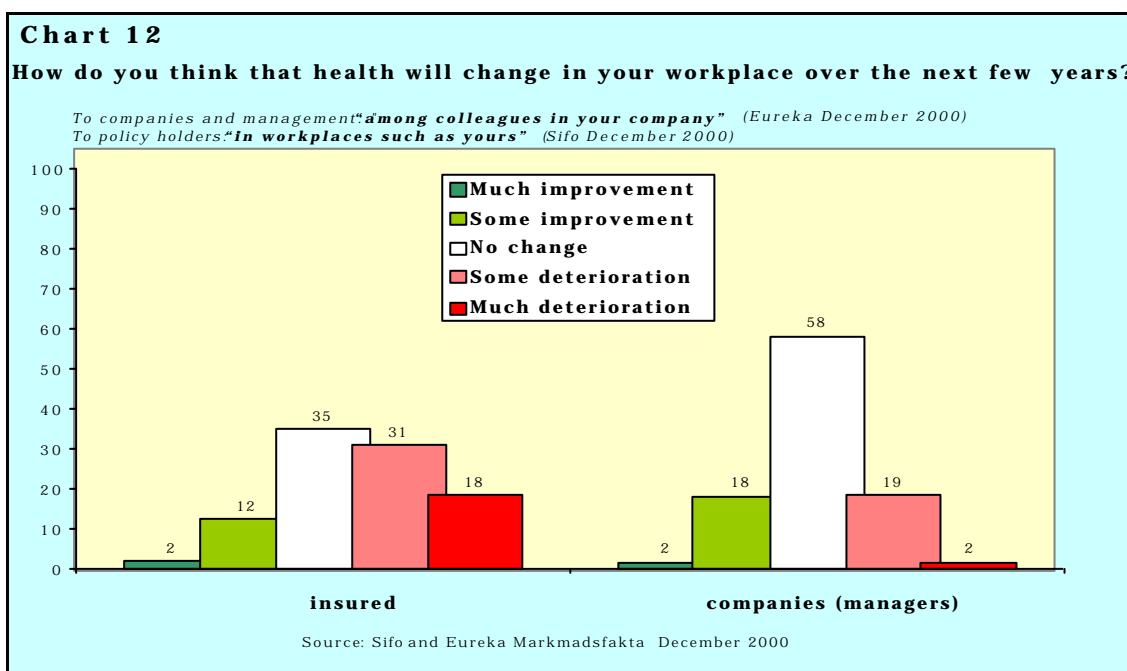
People who fell ill and were diagnosed in the group psychiatric illness/syndromes and burnout have, to a much larger extent than others, stated that they had sleeping problems, felt dejected or worried or that they had found it difficult to deal with various matters.



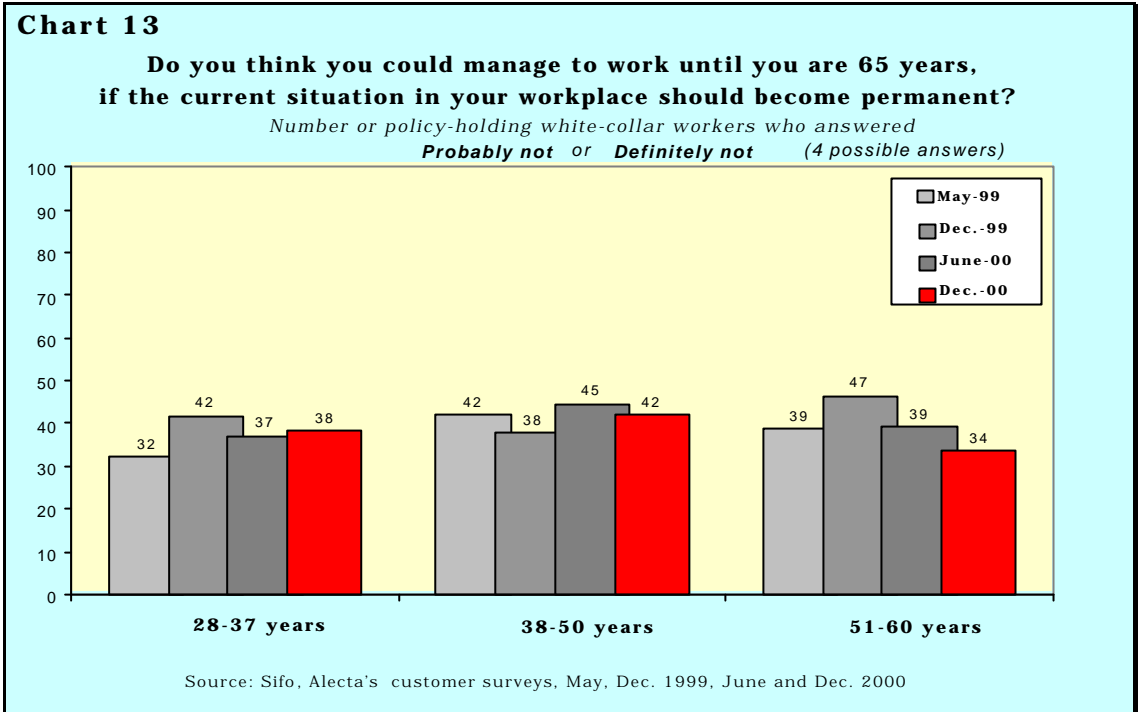
Policy holders think that their workloads have increased considerably. Two-thirds think that they have been given a great deal more to do in the last year and more than two out of five declare they feel increasingly inadequate.



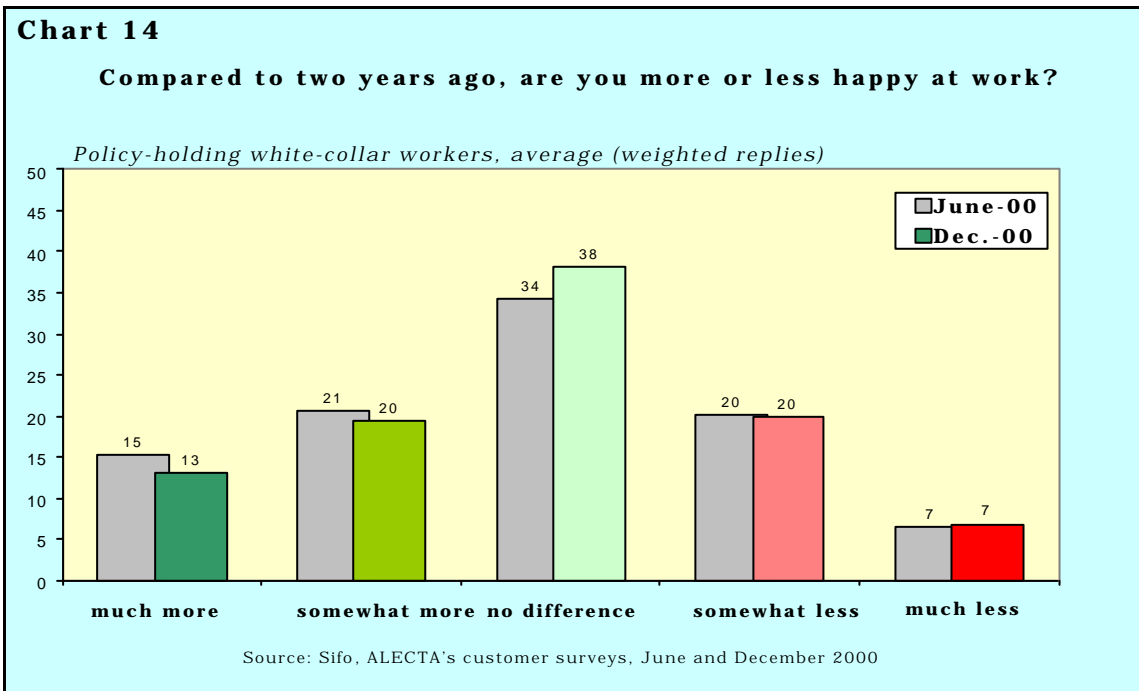
People at management level have a more positive view of how their health will develop but neither management nor employees think that their health status will improve. Half of the employees think that it will deteriorate and one third of them think that it will deteriorate to a large extent.



More than one in three people, regardless of their age, thinks that given their current work situation, they will not manage to work on until the age of 65.



In 1998, when these surveys were carried out, the number of people who liked their workplaces had increased, as compared to two years before.



Regardless of union membership, more than two-thirds of those surveyed think that the increase in sick-days is due to increasing stress and more demands in the workplace. One fourth think that working life has generally a tougher atmosphere. SACO members have the highest values

Chart 15

TCO's Stress Survey

(Sifo weeks 14-15 - 2001, 21 countries, approx. 200 persons per country)

The number of sick-days is increasing. What do you think is the reason for that?

	LO	TCO	SACO
• Increased stress and increased demands in the workplace	67-	71	74+
• Generally tougher atmosphere in working life	22-	26	29

Source: Sifo, TCO's stress survey, spring 2001 - 4, 200 respondents

Chart 16

TCO's Stress Survey

(Sifo weeks 14-15 - 2001, 21 countries, approx. 200 persons per country)

- 69 per cent say that increased stress and increased demands in the workplace are the reasons for the increase in the number of sick-days
- As many as 76 per cent of women quote stress as the reason for increased sick-leave
- 74 per cent of respondents in the public sector claim that stress is the reason for increased sick leave. The equivalent figure in the private sector is 65 per cent.

Source: Sifo, TCO's stress survey, spring 2001 - 4, 200 respondents

There is an increase of nearly 12% in sick leave in the private sector. Biggest increase - 17% - is in long periods of sick leave (>20 working days). Private sector white-collar workers have the largest increase, a 25% increase in sick leave of more than 20 working days.

Chart 17

"Hot off the press" statistics from Svenskt Näringsliv

	All of 2000		All of 1999	
	Manual Workers+white-collars Change in %	Manual Workers Change in %	White-collars Change in %	
Sick-leave total	11,6	9,9	13,9	
Duration of leave 6 to 20 working days	9,0	8,1	9,2	
>20 working days	16,9	13,4	24,7	

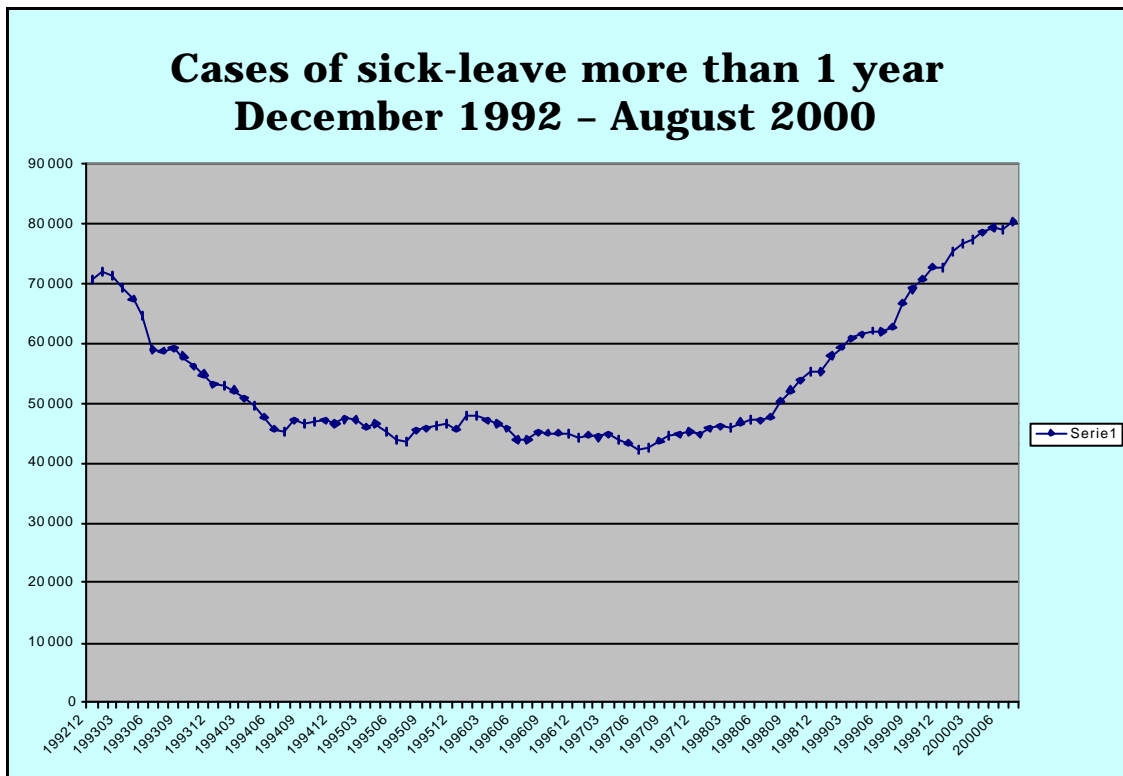
Source: Svenskt Näringsliv April 2001

Work related Stress and its Consequences

By Marie Åsberg, Åke Nygren and Gunnar Rylander¹

The material used for the work presented below originates from Alectra (insurance company) and AFA's records (Sweden's labour market insurance company). From an epidemiological point of view this material is extremely valuable as it covers all categories of people and allows us to select any sample that best suits requirements of the investigation.

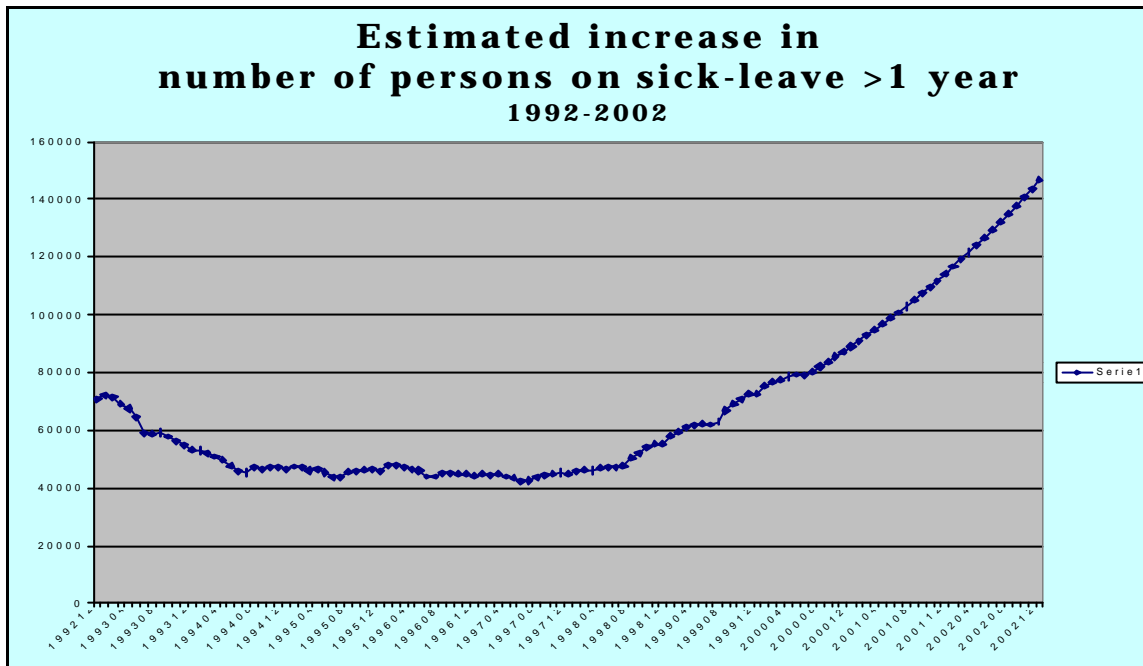
As the graph shows, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of cases of people on sick leave in Sweden in the past decade. After a slight downward trend in the mid 90's, the figures started moving up again at the turn of the new century.



Source: SOU (Statens offentliga utredningen) 2000/2

¹ Marie Åsberg and Åke Nygren are both medical doctors at the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm. Karolinska Institutet is the only university in Sweden with an exclusive focus on medicine. The research accounts for nearly 50% of the state funded medical research in the country. Karolinska Institutet is also famous for appointed Nobel Prize laureates in Physiology and Medicine. Marie Åsberg, PhD, is specialist in psychiatry and member of numerous committees at Karolinska. Åke Nygren, PhD, is a full-time researcher and has a professorship in prevention. Gunnar Rylander, MD, PhD, is specialist in psychiatry.

The number of persons on sick leave for more than a year doubled between 1992 and 2002. This upward trend has been particularly pronounced since the second half of 2000. If nothing is done to counter this development, it is likely that this figure will double again within 3 or 4 years.



As a result, the cost of sick leave has exploded. From US\$1.7 billion in 1998, it jumped to US\$3.3 billion in 2000. Parallel to this development, there has also been an increase in the number of people who have required psychiatric help and with symptoms of depression.

Costs of sick-leave are increasing

- **Costs, according to Swedish National Social Insurance Board (RFV)**
 - 1998: 1.70 billion USD
 - 1999: 2.27 billion USD
 - 2000: 3.30 billion USD
- **Prevalence study (RFV)**
 - Increasing number of persons with psychiatric diagnoses (from 11.7% to 13.9%, especially teachers and nursing staff)
- **Increasing number of persons on long-term sick-leave due to depression (Alecta och AFA)**

According to preliminary results from research carried out by Karolinska Institutet, symptoms of mental disorders are being diagnosed with increasing frequency among white-collar workers, whereas musculo-skeletal disorders have tended to diminish. Nearly 30% of those on sick leave for more than 90 days in the health care sector in Sweden show symptoms of mental disorders.

For blue-collar workers the dominating diagnosis in contrast is still musculo-skeletal disorder. During the period under review, mental disorders amongst this category of workers increased very slightly.

As part of the research, the Institut has undertaken a survey of the problems being encountered and is now focussing on the issue of mental illness, using available databases and cooperating with specialists – both from Sweden and abroad. In January 2001, a seminar was organised with prominent experts from various countries to assess the status of research in this field and share experiences.

Survey of the problems

- **Shoulder / neck**
- **Cardio-vascular disorders**
- **Asthma**
- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**
- **Mental illness**

- **Data bases**
- **Specialists**
 - **National**
 - **International**
- **Organize conferences**
- **Assessment of scientific papers**

Stress and burnout figure prominently as one of the main causes of long-term sick leave for white-collar workers. Whereas in 1998 lower back pain was the most commonly recorded complaint, in 2000 stress and depression ranked first, followed by stress and burnout.

Causes of long-term sick-leave		
1998	1999	2000
L o w b a c k p a i n	D e p r e s s i o n	D e p r e s s i o n
D e p r e s s i o n *	L o w b a c k p a i n	S T R E S S R E A C T I O N
S T R E S S R E A C T I O N		B U R N O U T
N e c k p a i n	N e c k p a i n	L o w b a c k p a i n
M u s c l e p a i n	B U R N O U T	N e c k p a i n
H e a r t a t t a c k	M u s c l e p a i n	M u s c l e p a i n

*includes burnout
White-collar workers, insured by Alecta

There may be several reasons for the increase in cases of depression. It is possible that what was called a backache ten years ago is today referred to as depression, or perhaps people are much more open about their mental symptoms than they used to be. Another reason could be a change in compensation practices. But, more likely, this increase simply reflects the fact that more and more people are suffering from burnout and do not receive adequate medical help.

Why does "depression" increase?
•Change in diagnostic practices?
❖ Reattribution?
❖ Increased openness?
•Change in compensation practices?
•True increase?
❖ Burnout?
❖ Other reasons??

Pilot study of long-term sick-leave for mental disorder

- **Are the subjects correctly diagnosed?**
- **Do they fulfill research criteria for depression?**
- **What works for treatment and rehabilitation?**



In order to understand what depression is, it is helpful to consider the basic emotions that all human beings share, irrespective of where they were born or their cultural background. All the basic emotions – e.g. joy, sadness, fear and surprise – have their own specific facial display and can be easily identified. There is a range of other emotions, called "cognitive emotions", such as love, pride, guilt, shame, jealousy and embarrassment for example.

If an emotion lingers on for a length of time, it is called a mood. There is nothing psychological about having moods, but if the mood state gets out of proportion to what elicited it or if it inhibits function, then it may be considered a sign of illness or disorder.

Sadness is the central point of depression and thoughts are in harmony with this sadness. It is often accompanied by depressive thoughts, concentration problems and a lack of initiative and involvement. Most people who have been depressed have, at one time or another, had suicidal thoughts. There are also physical symptoms such as poor sleep and poor appetite.

Symptoms of depression

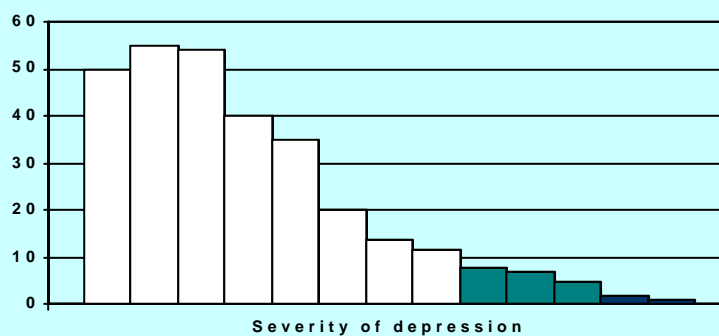
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|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Sadness | Concentration difficulties |
| Disquietude | Lack of initiative |
| Lack of involvement | Poor sleep |
| Depressive thoughts | Poor appetite |
| Thoughts of suicide | |

In certain cases, all of the symptoms of depression are present and very pronounced, in others only a few may show themselves and they may be less marked.

Based on this knowledge, it is possible to rate the severity of depression with a relatively high degree of precision. Although most people display few symptoms of depression, a significant number of them are borderline cases.

Severity of depression

Number of cases



A set of criteria has been established to help diagnose symptoms of depression. Since the beginning of the 1980s, doctors have used a statistical manual, which was produced by the American Psychiatric Association.

In order to be diagnosed, the person must be functionally impaired, have a subjective suffering and a specified number of symptoms with a certain degree of severity. This enables psychiatrists to use the same methodology to identify the epidemiological or psychiatric illness in a more systematic and precise way than was possible in the past.

Diagnostic criteria

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, 4th edition

DSM-IV

- Functional impairment
- Subjective suffering
- Specified number of symptoms of a certain severity

Epidemiological studies have revealed that 20% of the population will have a depressive illness at some time in their lives, and around 5% suffer from depression at any given time, which today is a common disorder. What is new and needs to be stressed is the rapid increase in depressive illnesses.

Karolinska Institutet is carrying out an investigation aimed at mapping out strategies for treatment and rehabilitation. White-collar workers on sick leave for more than 3 months have been invited to participate in the research. All of those involved are privately employed and in middle management positions. Data concerning their health status, personalities and the problems they faced at the workplace are being gathered and processed.

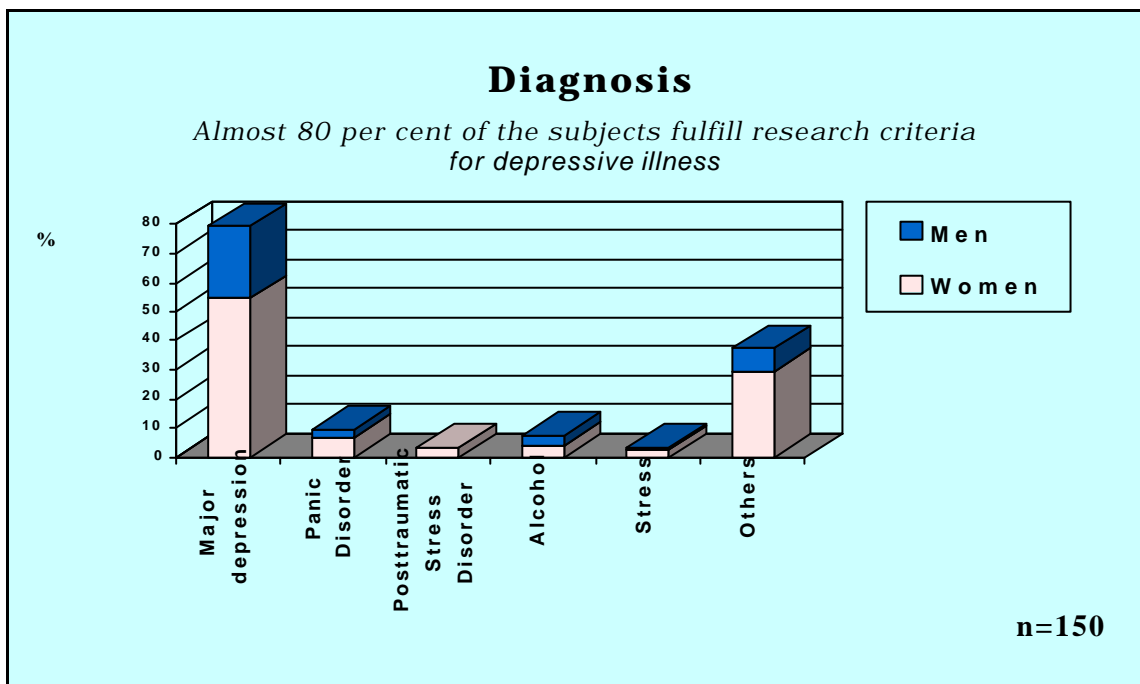
The bulk of the patients are about 40 years of age and the largest age group between 50 and 59. 60 was the upper limit age. A few young people have also been included in the investigation. Interestingly, there is a female preponderance in all age groups.

Pilot study of long-term sick-leave

- 150 consecutive patients on sick-leave for more than 3 months (middle management, privately employed, referred from insurance company)
- Full psychiatric interview including standardized diagnosis
- Personality inventories
- Blood & urine samples

Rylander, Rydmark, Nygren & Åsberg , 2001

As the table shows, depression is by far the most common diagnosis and women are more affected than men.

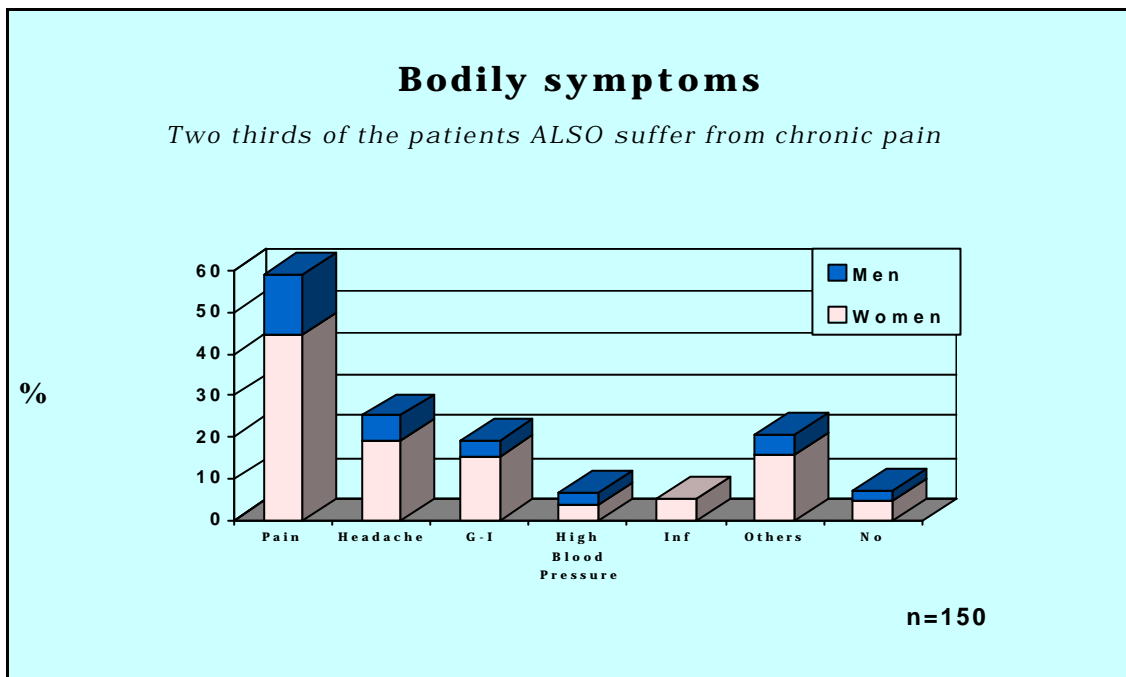


As to be expected, people who are hospitalised in a psychiatric clinic suffer from a much greater degree of depression than the patients covered in this study. Most of those who have been hospitalised have a very long history of problems in their relationships with others. Sometimes as much as 80% of them suffer from serious personality disorders.

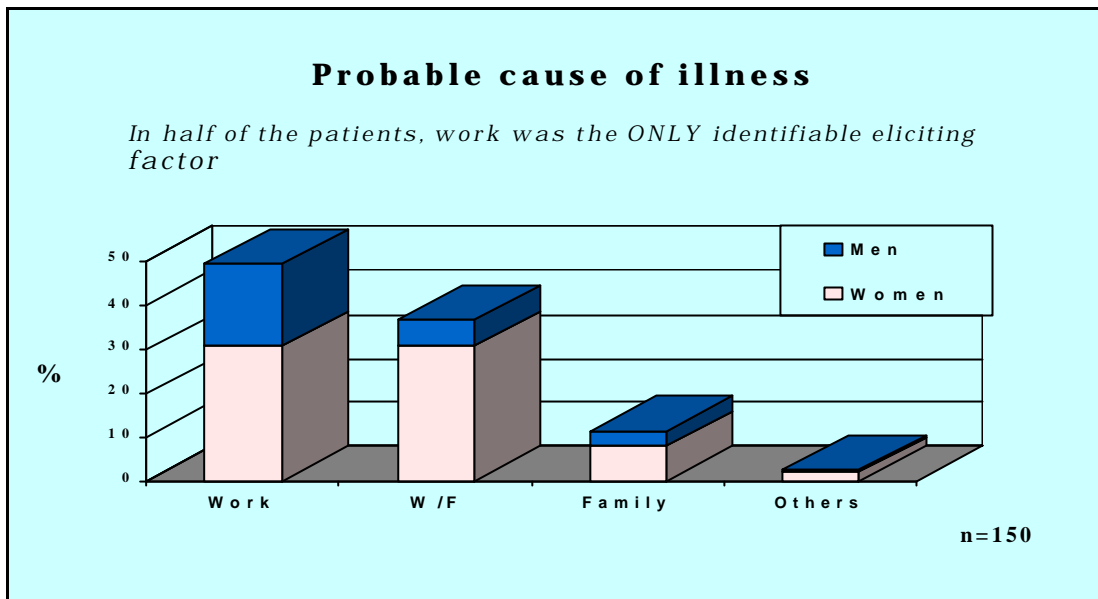
In contrast, in the group of long-term sick-leave patients subject of this study, personality disorders were extremely rare. They are quite "normal" people and do not display the characteristics that are commonly found in psychiatric patients.

But research has shown that these people have been working very hard, sometimes they are ambitious and have difficulties in setting limits for themselves. They would tend never to be satisfied with what they have been doing and would continue working even more. From an employer's point of view, they would be perfect employees, always reliable, always ready to stay longer in the evening or arrive earlier in the morning.

The absence of physical symptoms is a rare exception. The most common bodily symptoms are pain, lower back-pain, upper neck pain and headaches. Some men have high blood pressure. Indeed, two-thirds of the patients suffer from symptoms associated with chronic pain.

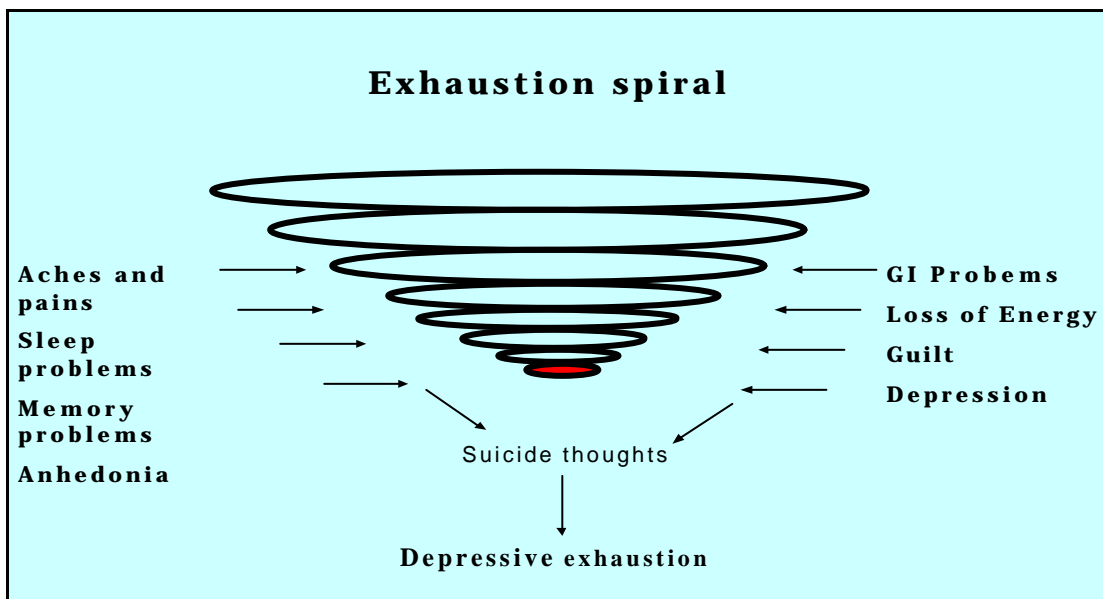


When asked about the probable cause of their illness, 60%-70% of the patients answered that it was the job. Beyond that, family problems were also mentioned, particular by women who are more exposed than men to the accumulated pressures of work and family problems.



One dramatic fact is that more than 60% of these patients have, at some time, considered suicide. Some 30% contemplated suicide in the preceding year and 15% have actually attempted suicide. So, in spite of their being classed as "normal" people, they show a certain vulnerability, which perhaps contributed to creating problems for them at work.

Most of the people could tell exactly the time they thought of collapse. It was often the result of a long crisis that could have taken months or even years before rising to the surface. The exhaustion spiral started with aches and pains, then sleep problems, a loss of energy, problems of concentration, etc. It is a process that develops over several years and, in some cases, leads to suicidal thoughts. The syndrome takes a long time to develop but it also takes a long time to cure.



C o n c l u s i o n s

- The project participants fulfil criteria for major depression
- Few personality disorders
- High frequency of attempted suicide
- High frequency of pain
- Job related problems very common

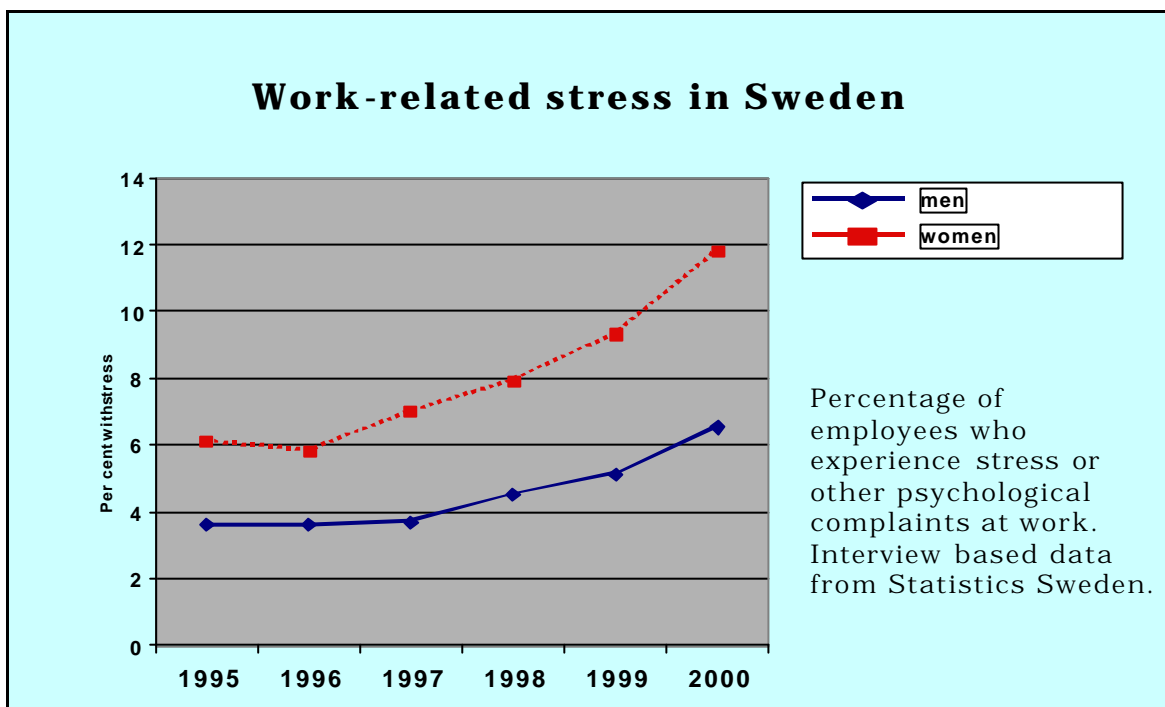
One of the most worrying problems results from repeated reorganisation at the workplace. The purpose of such restructuring is usually to improve productivity by slimming down the workforce and getting more work done by fewer people. Those who stay on the payroll have to accomplish more tasks and are exposed to increasing work pressure. This leads to exhaustion and, eventually, to traumatic experiences.

What job problems?

- » Repeated reorganizations
- » Exhaustion
- » Traumatic experiences

*Rylander, Rydmark, Nygren &
Åsberg , 2001*

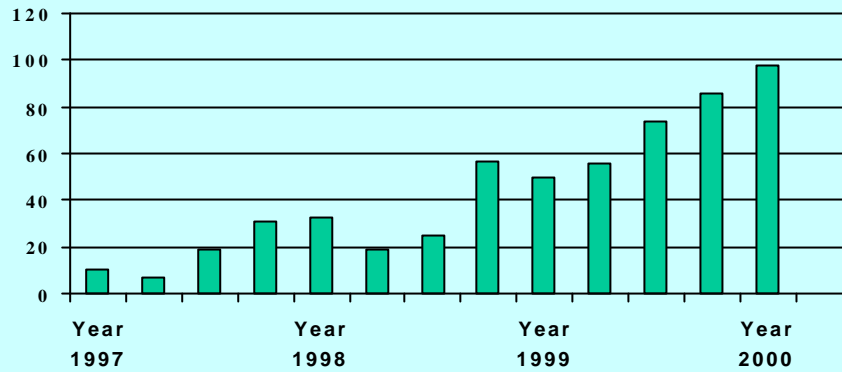
The above findings fit well with the data gathered from people in Sweden who are not on sick leave. "Statistics Sweden" carries out yearly interviews with samples of the working population and asks them about their experience of stress and psychological complaints at work. As the graph shows, in 1997, work-related stress started going up initially for women and then, a year later, for men. It is difficult to explain why this happened in 1997. Perhaps there had been a gradual build up of tension resulting from the process of company reorganisation and restructuring that had begun several years before.



Almost 40% of doctors in Sweden have suffered from burnt out. This is the reason why so many of them are now on sick leave – a development previously unheard of in that country.

The burnout phenomenon has been given a high profile in the Swedish press and has been the subject of many debates. Between 1997 and 2000, there has been a tenfold increase in the number of articles addressing this issue.

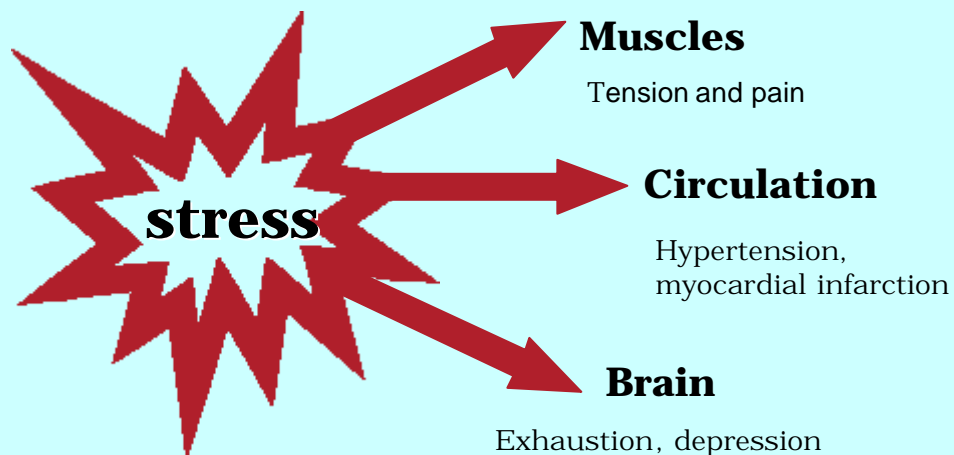
Articles on burnout in Swedish newspapers



Data from Affärsdata

Stress tends to cause problems with the muscular system and circulation, increasing the potential risk of myocardial infarction. It also affects the brain in terms of exhaustion and depression.

Work related stress and illness



Several types of treatment have been developed to combat stress and burnout, such as Chinese holistic practice, acupuncture, zone therapy and Dr. Bach's drops, etc. and which, in some cases, can be extremely expensive. However there is currently no known effective treatment for burnout syndrome.

Job-related depression - what should be done?

Diagnostic criteria

Treatment strategies

Prevention strategies

Have you got any treatment for burnout?

Health food store

- Ginseng, vitamins
- Chisandra

Holistic health practice

- Vitamins, minerals
- "Colon cleaning"

Chinese holistic practice

- Acupuncture, moksha

Balance treatment practice

- Rosen treatment

Medical forum practice

- Zone therapy

Et cetera, et cetera

Holistic practice

- Dr Bach's drops

*From Marie Söderfelt: Burnout?
Academic dissertation 1997*

Treatment for burnout



As yet, there is no known evidence-based treatment for the burnout syndrome.

What helps for stress?

Social support

What helps for stress?

Social support

Relaxation

With expectation that some form of effective treatment will finally emerge, efforts should be made to identify depression and treat it, teach people how to relax, define other types of strategies to cope with stress and burnout and, possibly, develop a form of psychotherapy which is focussed on the problems people are facing. Last but not least, something needs to be done about the workplace and the work life.

Treatment for depressive exhaustion & burnout

- **Treatment for depression**
- **Relaxation**
- **Coping with stress**
- **Psychotherapy**
- **The workplace?!**
- **Worklife??!???**

Treatments

Group psychotherapy

- Psychodynamic
- Cognitive

Treatment as usual

Advantages of group treatment

- Additional support
- Shame reducing
- Fewer therapists needed

Conclusions

- The increase observed in long-term sick-leave is largely due to depression
- This often appears to be related to occupational stress ("burnout"); but better diagnostic criteria are needed
- These patients are usually free from personality disorder, but they may be suicidal
- New treatments and rehabilitation programs should be designed and evaluated in randomized controlled trials

Summary

- Long-term sick-leave is increasing
- The number of persons on sick-leave for more than one year is greater than ever (84,000)
- Cut downs in health care
- Increased number of persons with stress related diagnoses
- Substantial increase in the number of persons with psychiatric diagnoses among those employed in county councils and among white-collar workers
- Moderate increase among blue-collar workers
- Health (above all mental health) is influenced by the working environment.

Stress and its Cost - an ILO Response

by **Vittorio Di Martino**¹

Preliminary remarks

1. Stress does not concern white-collar workers and management alone. It affects all professions and categories of workers – whether manual or non-manual. Evidence shows that a broad and growing range of occupations are prone to work-related stress.
2. Generally, stress tends to be considered in the context of developed countries. But it is becoming increasingly globalised and affects workers in developing countries as well.
3. Stress should not be considered in isolation. It is linked to violence, harassment, drugs and other health hazards at work and outside the workplace.

Globally, the impact of stress is appalling. Over one-third of the workforce in industrialized countries is suffering from the stress syndrome and this percentage is on the increase.

Understanding Stress – the Karasek Model

The Karasek model describes the characteristics of the worker's tasks that are associated with psychological stress. According to this model, it is not only the psychological demands of work that lead to stress and related illnesses, but also a situation of high demand combined with low worker control over the work process. Stress occurs when workers are inhibited from responding to the stressor on the basis of their own optimal psychological and physiological response pattern, because of external factors over which they have no control.

The model for stress is based on 3 variables:

- Job decision latitude or control
- Psychological demands
- Social support

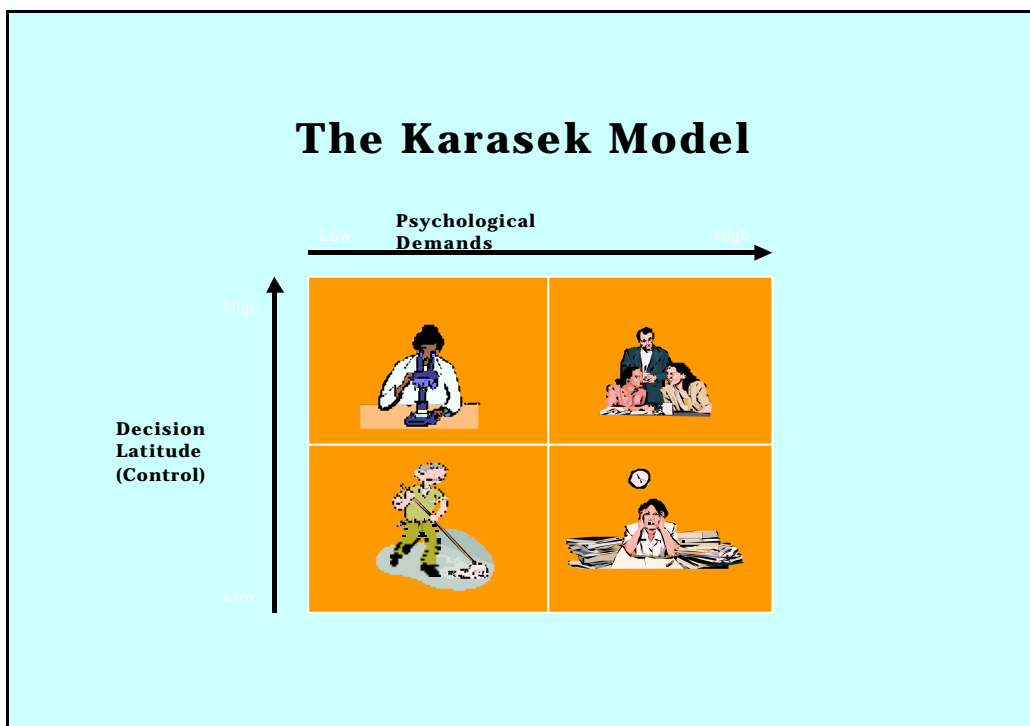
¹ Senior Advisor, Innovation and Organisational Wellbeing, ILO, Geneva.

Four situations (control-demand) can be identified:

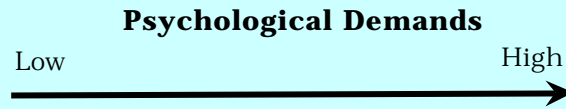
1. Low-low or passive situation where the employee has enough control and the demand is not too high;
2. Low-high or high-strain situations where the employee has little control and high demand;
3. High-low or low-strain situations where the employee has a lot of control and demand is low;
4. High-high or active situation where the employee is facing high demand and high control.

Social support and interaction contribute to stress reduction.

The use of this model can facilitate understanding of the factors involved in the generation of stress and the identification of the most appropriate measures to combat stress.



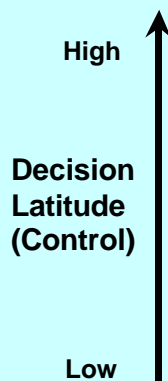
The Karasek Model



Psychological demands are defined as burdens put on the individual. Examples include:

- Work load
- Time pressure
- Fast-paced work
- Monotonous work
- Physical constraints

The Karasek Model



Decision latitude is defined as the capacity of the individual to respond to demands. It allows one to be the master of his / her working environment. Examples include:

- Being able to decide how one will perform a given task
- Being allowed to solve problems
- Being able to adjust one's pace at one's will.

The Karasek Model

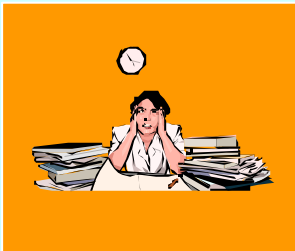
1. High-strain



Most adverse psychological strain

- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Burnout
- Psychological illness
- Examples include machine-paced operatives such as assemblers, cutting operatives, inspectors and freight handlers, as well as other low-status service operatives such as waiters or cooks

Burnout

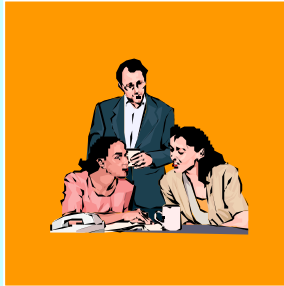


Defined as emotional exhaustion due to long-term stress. People that have suffered burnout:

- Often feel that they have nothing more to offer
- Develop a negative attitude towards patients, clients, students or colleagues (depersonalisation) and
- Feel that they are less skillful than before (reduced skills)

The Karasek Model

2. Active



Average stress

- Learning
- Growth
- Increased motivation
- Examples of occupations in this sector include high-prestige occupations such as lawyers, judges, physicians, professors, engineers, nurses and managers of all kinds

The Karasek Model

3. Low-strain



Low stress

The worker has a lot of control and the demand is low.

Examples of occupations within this sector include sales clerks, foresters, linemen and natural scientists, often involve significant training and self-pacing.

The Karasek Model

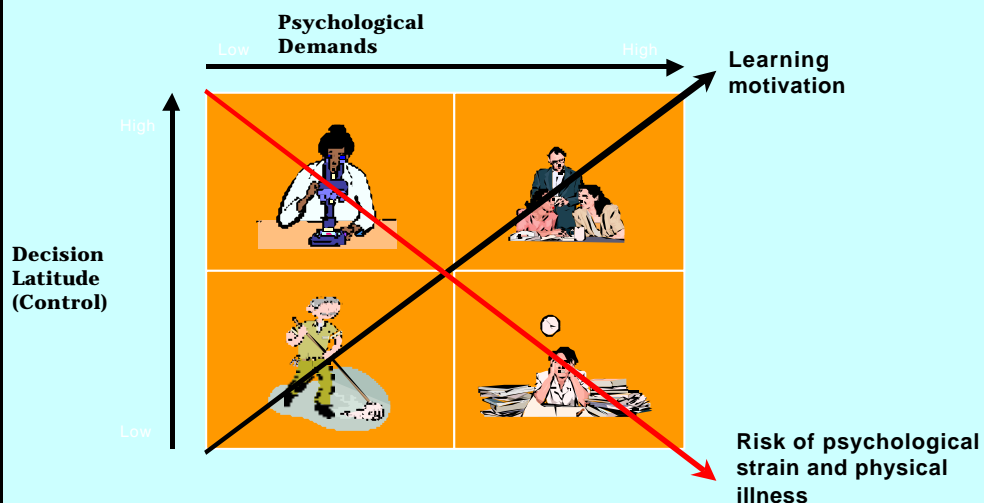
4. Passive



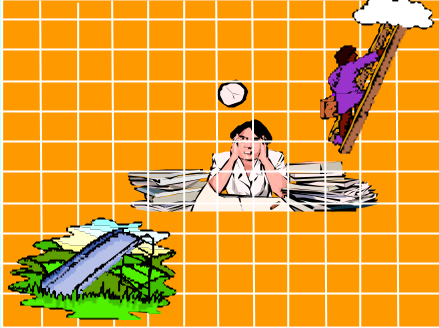
Caused by a sequence of job situations that rejects workers' initiatives

- Unmotivating
- Negative learning
- Unlearning previously learned skills
- Includes clerical workers such as stock and billing clerks, transport operatives and service personnel such as janitors

The Karasek Model



Social Support



- Working environment in which supportive collegial relationships are encouraged
- Individual perception that others can be relied on for social support
- Previous experience in which social support was provided

*Increased social support =
reduced stress*



The Karasek Model

Stress will generally increase if control decreases while psychological demand increases.

Stress will generally decrease if control increases while psychological demand decreases.

Stress will generally decrease if social support increases.

The costs of stress

Stress has a very high cost for people, companies and for society at large.

For the employee, high levels of stress may lead to a variety of disorders and illness and also alter the immune system. In addition, the loss of capacity to cope with working and social situations can lead to less success at work, possibly unemployment. It can give rise to greater strain in family relationships and even result in depression or death.

For enterprises, the cost of stress is multifaceted. It can be reflected in absenteeism, higher medical costs and staff turnover, with the associated cost of recruiting and training new workers. It can also take the form of lower productivity and efficiency.

Cost of work-related stress²:

- ***In the United Kingdom, it has been suggested that over 40 million working days are lost each year due to stress-related disorders;***
- ***In Australia, the Federal Assistant Minister for Industrial relations estimated the cost of occupational stress to be around A\$30 million in 1994;***
- ***In the United States, over half of the 550 million working days lost each year due to absenteeism are stress-related.***

What kind of response ?

As a rule, there is no single cause of stress. It is a complex phenomenon and differences in the particular circumstances of each case make it virtually impossible to provide a simple solution for its management or elimination. Wide-ranging types of interventions can be envisaged, but any intervention to be effective must take into account the specific features of the particular work situation and the personal characteristics of the individual. Every workplace is different and must be analysed in its specificity. To this end, an "audit" of the problems encountered at the workplace can prove very helpful.

Anti-stress measures may target the work environment and/or the individual.

There are several types of interventions, such as:

² Figures cited in the Pilot Edition, modular series, Emerging Health-Related Problems at Work, March 2001, Safework, ILO.

- Intervention of the external socio-economic environment
- Legislation, directives
- Intervention on technology, work organisation and the specific work station
- Intervention in the physical environment (light, noise, etc.)
- Arrangement of working time and breaks in relation to the workload
- Participation in decision-making
- Individual ways of coping with stress
- Training, counselling and other supporting measures at the company level
- Specific intervention for health protection and promotion
- Appropriate medical surveillance

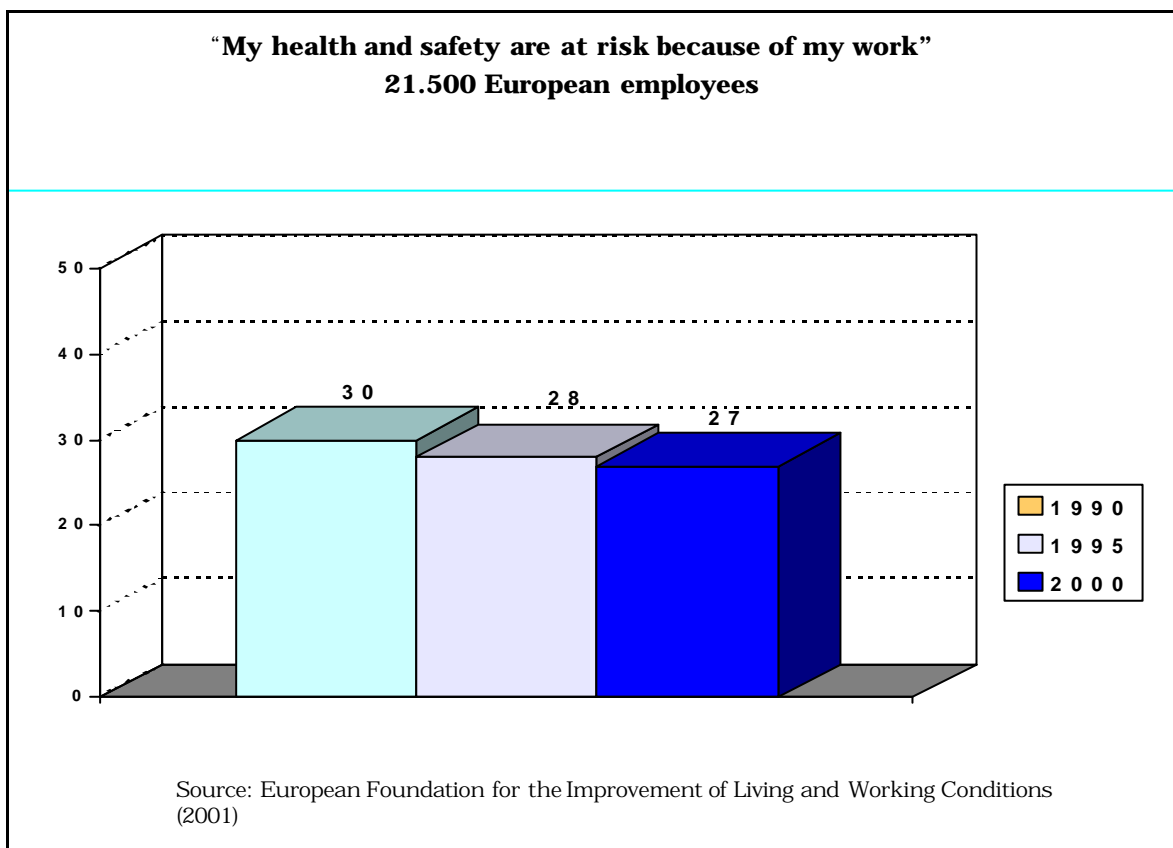
Preventive approaches to stress and burnout are becoming more and more relevant in terms of research and policy orientation. Prevention should definitely prevail over cure.

Stress and Burnout – from a global Problem to a global Solution

By Professor Michiel Kompier¹

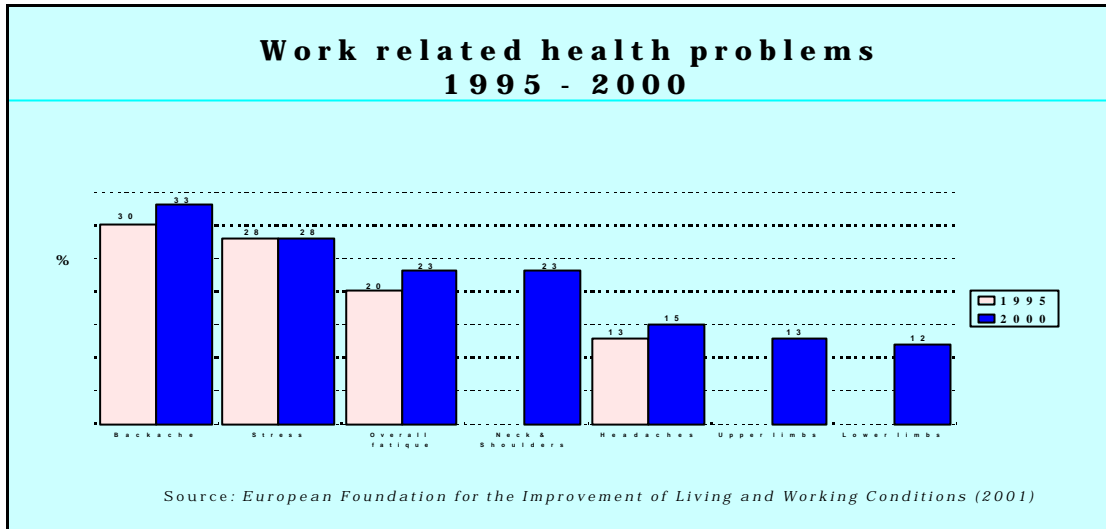
In March 2001, the Dublin-based European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions published a new Survey on Working Conditions. The survey takes place once every five years and covers 21,000 workers in the 15 member states of the European Union (1,500 in each member state and 500 in Luxembourg). The first two surveys were carried out in 1990 and 1995.

About 27% of European employees answered that their health and safety were at risk because of their work.

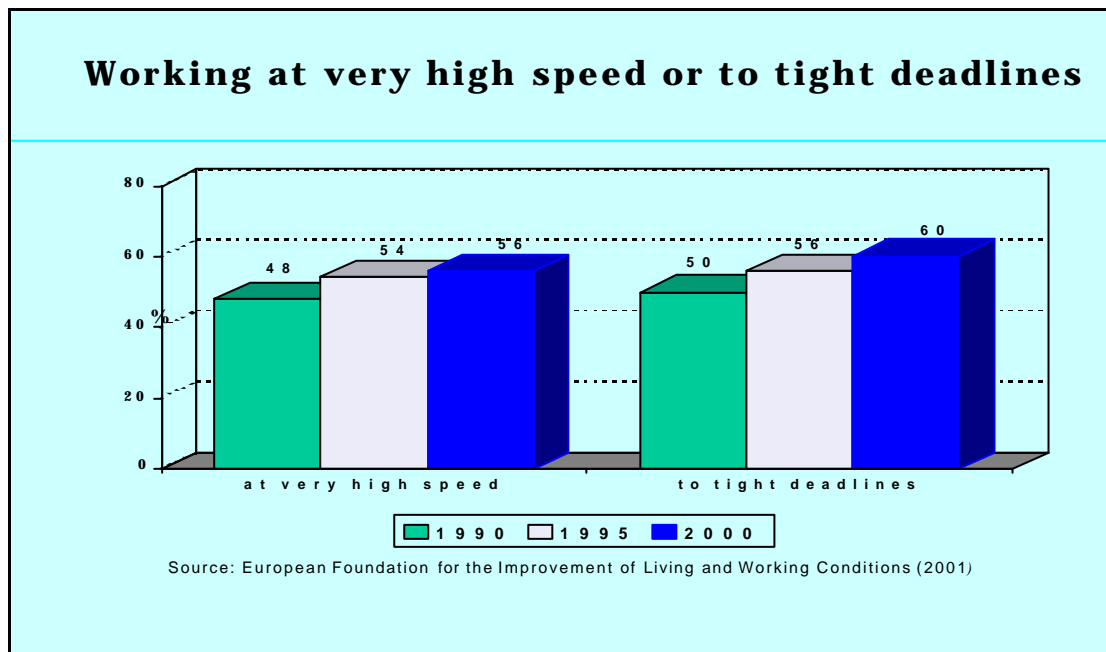


¹ Work & Organizational Psychology, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands. The Department of Work and Organisation Psychology of the University of Nijmegen is carrying out a research programme called "Work, Stress and Health". A large part of this research is focusing on stress prevention. Team-based work, which is often the cause of fatigue and stress, is another field of study. The Department is further involved in projects on overtime with its impact on health, and the relationship between work and private.

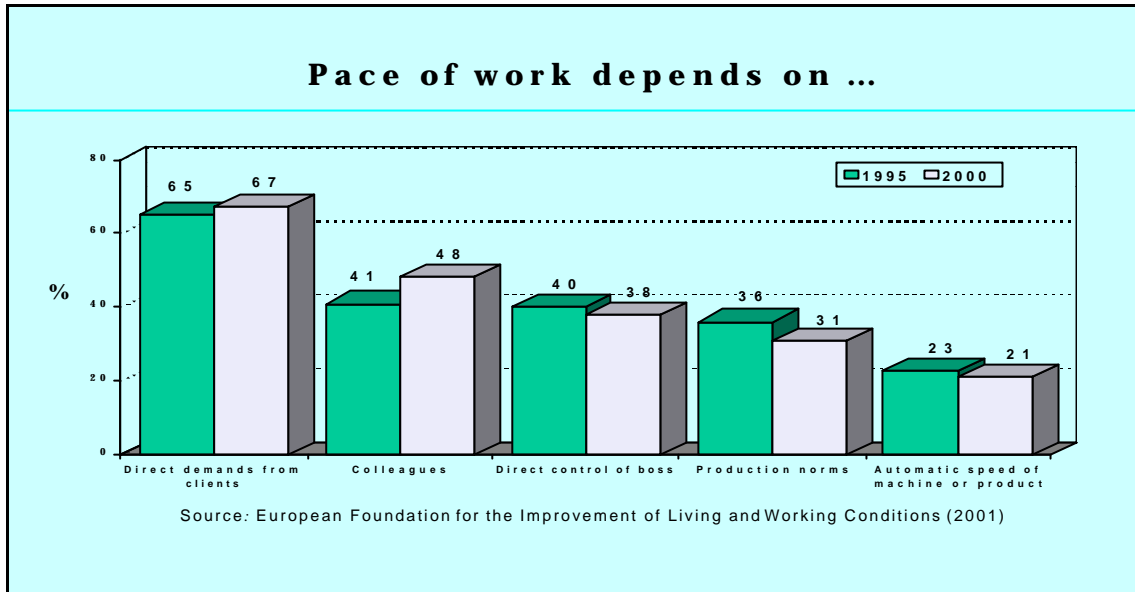
Not surprisingly, the EU stress average is 28% of the workforce and overall fatigue 23%. This fatigue, which is a very common complaint among European employees and is on the increase, is a precursor of what is called burnout or exhaustion.



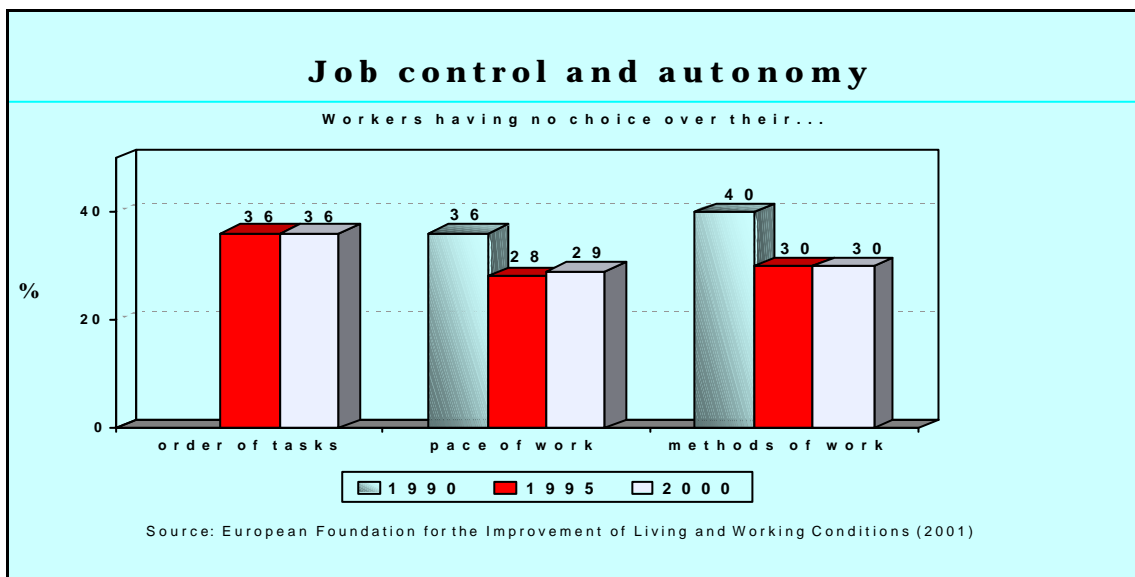
One of the most striking results of the survey is the intensification of work. It has risen sharply in the past few years and shows no sign of slowing down. 56% of the workers are exposed to working at high speed and 60% of tight deadlines. People might work shorter hours but they have to work faster.



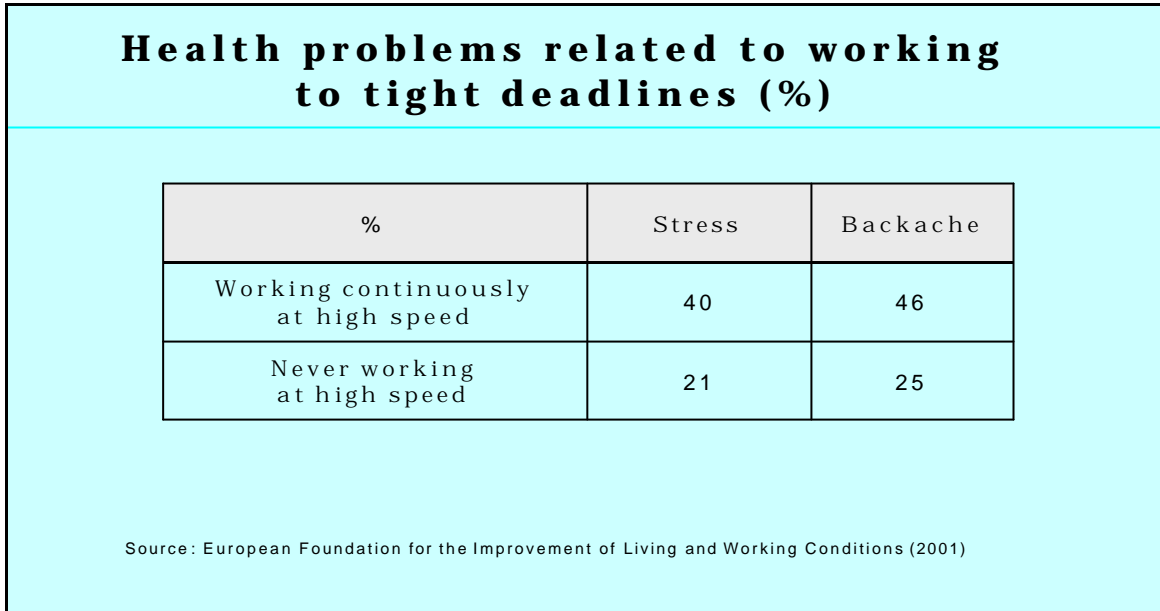
An interesting feature of this survey is that the causes of this increase have been analysed as well. About two-thirds of the respondents said that the high pace of work was due to direct demands of clients and the fact that they worked more and more in a service economy. Factors influencing the pace of work are moving away from production targets to external demands of clients, users, etc. and this development affects white-collar workers more than blue-collar workers. The client is king and determining the work rhythm. Employers have put customers at the heart of their strategy.



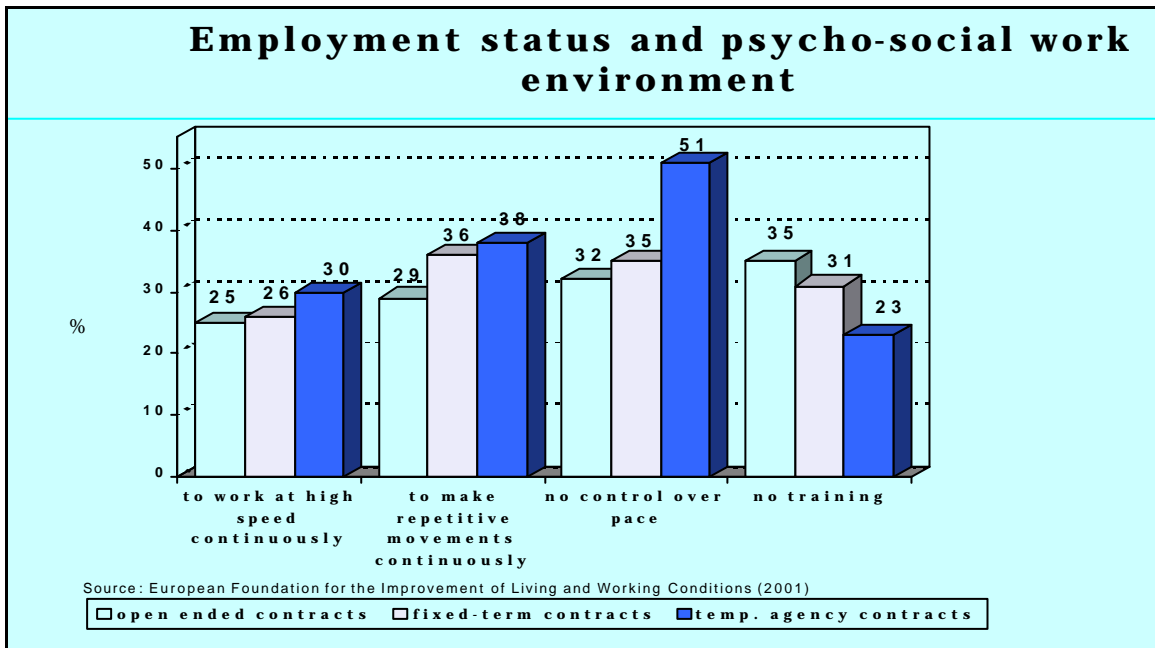
Control and autonomy are an important dimension to understand whether or not people develop stress. Over one-third of the employees reported that they have no control over what they are doing, their work is determined by others.



As the picture shows, people working continuously at high speed have twice as much stress complaints and backache than those who never work under such conditions. The quality of working life is definitely related to the workers' health status.



There are large differences between the workers' quality of working life and their employment status. Employees on open ended contracts have the best working conditions, work less at high speed and have more control over their work pace than those working for temporary agencies.



A US study on the changing workforce reveals similar trends. About 30% of the people interviewed said it was likely that they would lose their jobs in the next couple of years. Job insecurity is one of the key stress-related words in today's working life and it is mainly because of a loss of control over their work. Many people also said they were extremely tired when they got up in the morning and 30% underlined that work had a negative impact on their private life. The inverse relationship – private life – negatively influencing behavior at work – is less prominent.

1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce

Bond, Galinsky & Swanberg (1998)

3,000 employees, national representative sample - interviews

1997	
How likely to lose current job in next couple of years?	
Somewhat likely	20%
Very likely	9%
How often during past 3 months : (often / very often)	
* emotionally drained from your work	26%
* felt used up at the end of the day	36%
* tired when you got up in morning and had to face another day on the job	36%
* felt burned out or stressed by your work	26%
No energy to do things with family or other important people in your life because of your job (often / very often)	28%
Family or personal life drained you of the energy you needed to do your job (often/very often)	7%

As a Dutch research carried out by Marc van Veldhoven has shown, Dutch metalworkers suffer relatively little from emotional workload but a great deal from physical workload and job insecurity. The relationship with the employer, the lack of autonomy and inadequate learning possibilities have also been identified as major causes of work-related stress.

Work Stress in the Dutch Metal branch	
Source: Marc van Veldhoven (SKB, University of Nijmegen)	
- Period:	1995-2000
- Total N:	70,000 persons
- Metal:	N=1896,40 companies, manual and non-manual work
- General mean:	0 (-1 rel.favorable/positive to 1 rel. unfavorable/negative)
* <i>Relatively positive:</i>	
Emotional workload	-.38
Need for recuperation	-.12
Worrying	-.12
Work speed/work quantity	-.09
Commitment to organization	-.09

Work Stress in the Dutch Metal branch	
Source: Marc van Veldhoven (SKB, University of Nijmegen)	
* <i>Relatively negative:</i>	
Physical workload	.37
Insecurity future	.31
Autonomy	.17
Relationship with boss	.14
Learning possibilities	.13
Skill variety	.11
Participation	.07
Work pleasure	.03
Relationship with colleagues	.02

The European Framework Directive on Health and Safety at Work does not explicitly use the term "job stress". However it is plain that it includes both the physical and psychosocial work environment.

European legislation with respect to job design and well-being

(European Framework Directive on Health and Safety at Work, 1993)

The employer has a duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to the work, following general principles of prevention:

- Evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
- Avoiding risks
- Combatting the risks at source
- Adapting the work to the individual
- Developing a coherent overall prevention policy

⇒ Primary prevention

Why this increase in work stress?

- 1 From manual to mental work
- 2 Globalization of the economy
- 3 Reorganization and mergers
- 4 Information and communication technology
- 5 24-hour economy
- 6 New production concepts
- 7 Rapid expansion of the service sector
- 8 Flexibilization of work
- 9 Work-Home-Spillover
- 10 Less working hours & working overtime

Several models have been developed to assess stress risks at work. The Karasek "job strain" model states that the greatest risk to physical and mental health from stress occurs to workers facing high psychological workload demands or pressures combined with low control or decision latitude in meeting those demands. It is widely used in occupational health psychology. The Meijman model puts emphasis on the fact that it is the combination of high effort with insufficient recovery that causes stress. If people do not recover enough, the body begins to change. There are hormonal and vascular changes, which, in the long term, can cause serious health problems.

A third model- the ERI model (E = effort, R= reward, I= imbalance) by Siegrist argues that high effort is not necessarily a problem but it should be combined with rewards, not only material but also career opportunities and support from others. People willing to invest a lot of effort and work very hard want something in return. If this balance is lacking, stress is the consequence. The last model states that there should be a balance between the person and the environment. In one way or another, all the models put emphasis on balance as a key factor for avoiding stress.

What is it that makes work stressful?

- 1 High demands but low control and low social support
(Karasek & Theorell)
- 2 High effort but insufficient recovery
(Meijman)
- 3 High effort (demands) but low rewards
(Siegrist)
- 4 Bad person-environment fit
(Kahn)

Stress is imbalance!

Is stress an individual phenomenon?

- * Yes
 - Stress results from individual appraisal

- * But, on the other hand
 - do not reduce stress to 'a subjective experience'
 - certain job characteristics are unhealthy for most employees
 - 'collective' or 'objective' stressors

Stress has been the subject of numerous investigations, many books and articles have been written, but there are few sound and serious studies on prevention. Most of the time, it is a reactive and "band-aid approach", which targets the individual rather than the organisation and does not look at the way measures are implemented and whether there is participation, good communication, etc. Too little attention is paid to contextual and process variables.

**Occupational stress prevention:
review of the field**

e.g. DeFrank & Cooper (1987); Kahn & Byosiere (1992); Murphy (1984, 1986, 1996); Van der Hek & Plomp (1997); Briner & Reynolds (1999); Cox (2000), Van der Klink (2001), Griffiths & Rial-Gonzalez (2000)

- 1 Activity!
- 2 Primarily 'band-aid approach'
- 3 Main target individual, rather than organization
- 4 Lack of serious research into effects
- 5 Risk assessment often lacking and 'One size fits all'
- 6 Too little attention for contextual and process variables ('how'?)

Very often company management points at personal problems of employees and argues that stress is primarily a matter of individual differences. Management often does not bother to question the way work is organised. Moreover, psychology and occupational doctors are claimed to cure people, and not so much the work place or work organisation. Little research has been done on the cost and benefits of stress prevention.

Why?

- 1 Attitudes and values of company management
- 2 Nature and traditions of psychology & occupational medicine
- 3 Stressors may be inherent to job
- 4 Stress research neglects the study of costs and benefits of stress prevention
- 5 Matters of methodology

A study was made of cases in stress prevention in nine European countries and in industry branches involving large, medium-sized and small companies. These companies were selected because they were facing a high level of absenteeism, difficulties in recruiting labour as well as a lot of health problems. Several instruments were used, such as checklists, interviews and questionnaires. Often there was a combination of instruments and benchmarking which enables to rate a company on the basis of certain pre-established standards.

9 European cases in stress prevention

Country	Sector
Finland	Forestry
Netherlands	Hospital
Belgium	Pharmaceutical Company
U.K.	Public sector
Denmark	Bus Company
Sweden	Postal service
Germany	Hospital
Ireland	Airport Management Company
Italy	School of nurses

European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, Kompier, Cooper & Geurts (2000)

'Step by step' comparison of 9 European cases:

- Motives:
 - High absence figures
 - Shortages on the labour market
 - Prevention of health problems
 - Improving work and productivity
- Instruments:
 - Simple checklists, interviews
 - 'Professional' instruments
 - Questionnaires
 - Analysis of administrative data
- Often combination
- 'Benchmarking'

Most important interventions, 9 European projects

- Work directed
 - Work redesign (4)
 - Improved social support (4)
 - Work time schedules (4)
 - Ergonomics and technology (3)
- Person directed: HRM and training
 - Training employees (7)
 - Training management (4)
 - Promoting healthy lifestyle (3)
- Other measures:
 - Development of occupational health service (1)

Outcome / Evaluation:

'Objective' outcome:

- Changes in sickness absenteeism in 4 cases: with 3 cases of significant decrease

'Subjective' outcome:

- 7 cases
- Positive self reported results:
 - * less constraints in work
 - * positive evaluations of implemented changes
 - * decreased health complaints

Costs and benefits:

- No economists, information about 4 cases
- 1 detailed analysis: positive cost/benefit ratio
- 3 cases: positive indications
- other cases, no data

Discussion

1. Were these cases successful?
→ Generally speaking: 'yes'
2. Internal validity: Are improvements due to interventions?
→ No direct proof. At least plausible
3. What were the effective medications?
→ Often cocktail. Hard to say

It may well be that successful stress prevention depends not so much on a specific measure but rather on a general approach

Five critical success factors

1. Stepwise and systematic approach
2. Adequate diagnosis
3. Combination of work-directed and worker-directed measures
4. Participative approach
5. Top management support

Assertion of Employee Interests and the New Autonomy at Work¹

By Wilfried Glissmann²

1. Irritating Phenomena in Business Enterprises

Fundamental changes are taking place in the workplace. In the last few years members of works' councils have noticed the following irritating phenomena in business enterprises:

- Individual differences are being used by management. Each and everyone have to define his or her own specific contribution. The planning of the work (who does what in the team) has to be carried out as autonomously as the organisation of time. Many business decisions thus result from the interaction of the employees within their teams.
- Co-workers are under severe pressure which is not caused, however, by management's orders. This pressure results from technical and factual entanglements that confront the employees. How can factual problems produce such heavy personal pressure?
- To the employees, many of the problems of the workplace appear as totally individual difficulties each has to cope with on his/her own. Why are general proposals seen and meant but not really helpful?
- Colleagues are working much longer than they should need to. This working without end does not follow from management's orders - the employees do it on their own account. They themselves ignore all overtime regulations actually meant to protect them. Why are they doing that?
- In business enterprises, cruel mechanisms are taking place between the co-workers. It is peer pressure aimed at those who do not go along and who do not contribute towards the survival of the business unit. What is the reason for this astonishing violence?
- Again and again colleagues mistake the interest of the enterprise for their own individual interest. For this reason, appeals for acting in solidarity are understood not as a means to realise one's own interest, but as a request to put one's own interest last. What is the basis for solidarity under these new conditions?

¹ Published in: *Concepts and Transformation. International Journal of Action Research and Organizational Renewal*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia. Volume 4, Number 1: pp. 83 – 105.
The German version is published in: Wilfried Glissmann / Klaus Peters: *Mehr Druck durch mehr Freiheit. Die neue Autonomie in der Arbeit und ihre paradoxen Folgen*. Hamburg 2001, pp 112 - 128 (<http://www.vsa-verlag.de/buecher.01/glissmann.html>)

² Wilfried Glissmann, born 1953. Head of the Works Council of IBM Deutschland GmbH Düsseldorf and member of the Central Works Council. e-mail-address: wilfried.glissmann@t-online.de

This essay claims that a new form of entrepreneurial hegemony lies at the root of all these phenomena. This new type of rule does not function by command and control, but by facilitating self-organising processes in the enterprise and by a form of indirect management control. For employees, the understanding of these confusing constructions is a prerequisite to determine and to assert individual interest under the new conditions.

2. The New Autonomy at Work

The new form of entrepreneurial hegemony begins with the MD or the CEO confronting the workforce as directly as possible with the prevailing conditions of the company.

The market is segmented. Those in which the company wishes to be active are confronted with the segments of the company, and the employees are made to feel the pressure of the market as directly as possible.

The employees are supposed to react autonomously to the changes in the market, to find out for themselves what is entrepreneurially appropriate for the company, and then implement it. The thinking here is: Do whatever you like but make sure you are profitable. Thanks to these actual changes, entrepreneurial functions have become a part of the employees' work at the doing level: the employees become, so to speak, "dependent independent employees" in their own company (Peters 1997)³.

A new dynamism is developing in the companies, and it is instructive how this generates very ambivalent emotions. On the one hand, the new autonomy at work is something "really good" that not only appeals to

³ To understand the "dependent independent inside the company" you should read Dr. Klaus Peters' "The New Autonomy at Work". In section 3.5 und 3.6 he describes how the entrepreneur places the employee in this new position by performing two manoeuvres:

The "...entrepreneur's first move is simply to step aside. (...) Instead of setting up the 'departments' of a company based on a command structure, this company has so-called 'partially autonomous units which must fight for survival and profit maximisation on the market, just like independent companies. (...) Of course the entrepreneur does not step aside in order to relinquish his power; his aim is to secure and extend it. Just as he intends to increase the pressure on his employees to perform by eliminating coercion, he wishes to attain greater power by surrendering control. For this reason, manoeuvre no. 1 must be linked to manoeuvre no. 2. The entrepreneur transforms himself from a commanding and punishing authority to a prevailing condition faced by employees acting as entrepreneurs - within the company!

Manoeuvre no. 1 releases the employees from the dependency of the command system into the independence of entrepreneurial activity: they themselves face the company's situation - in the same way as the entrepreneur before them. Through manoeuvre no. 2, this independence is embedded in dependency, i.e. they become dependent independents, because - unlike the entrepreneur! - they face not only the prevailing conditions of the company, but in addition the entrepreneur as a prevailing condition."

employees but inspires them as well. On the other hand, this dynamic embodies a confusing phenomenon of fear and "work without end". Excessive demands, lack of reflection, work overload - all inherent in the overall system - are typical of the new situation. And that is bad enough.

3. Mechanisms Perpetrated on Me

This new dynamism at company level is very difficult to grasp. Although it is supposed to be self-organising, in fact these processes are controlled by the new art of indirect management from the top - despite the emphasis on self-organisation. Below I will describe some of the self-organising mechanisms - from the perspective of the individuals working under the new conditions.

3.1. The Investment/Disinvestment Mechanism

First of all, let us take a look at a new decision-making process in transnational groups of companies. As already indicated, the group of companies will most likely be segmented. Each company segment will be directly exposed to the corresponding market segment, and group resources will be allocated like this:

- Resources will be invested in those business units that are successful and
- Resources will be disinvested from those business units that are not successful.

But how is success to be determined? Well, as a rule, a certain profit margin is laid down even though, with the more strategically important units, red figures (losses) are actually interpreted as an investment in the future. If, however, the business units in question are less strategically important, then the employees will be told to prove that their business units can operate profitably. Yet no matter how success or lack of it is defined, each segment of the company sees itself as being exposed to the very real danger of disinvestment. That is a threat that I, as an employee must fear - and with reason.

How is the investment/disinvestment mechanism perpetrated via my person? Answer: I experience it as excessive demand, lack of reflection, and work overload within an overall system. The excessiveness of the profit expectations of shareholders who are external to the group translates into the excessiveness of internal company targets and the excessiveness of the demands made on me as an employee at the doing level. This mechanism actually gives me a guilty conscience. (Somehow I'm not doing enough and/or somehow I have to keep on making

excuses.) I begin to doubt about my own competence. (Perhaps it is my fault that I can't handle all this.) In addition, there is a feeling of existential angst that I keep experiencing. This fear for my livelihood is all the more upsetting for people who previously experienced themselves to be successful and, yes, strong.

This mechanism is fairly difficult for outsiders to grasp. After all, such phenomena would never occur if the excessive demands did occur as the conscious instructions of other people. Because I could then reject them and I could debate them with these people - the management - since these people would seem to have lost all sense of measure. That would mean a conflict between me and other people. But exactly that is not the point.

The excessiveness inherent in this dynamic is rather the result of a mute pressure that might be compared to the laws of the market. The result of people being made to confront the prevailing conditions of their business unit and having to react to these conditions in an entrepreneurially appropriate way. The core of the new can be seen in the fact that I, as an employee, am not only responsible for the use value aspect of my work, but as well for the valorisation aspect of my work. The self-organising process is nothing else than the processing of these two work aspects in my practical doing.

As a person, I am directly confronted in my daily work with both aspects of necessity. With the necessity in the technical sense (in regard to the creation of use value) and with the necessity of valorisation. As a person, I am constantly faced with decisions. The two aspects virtually tear me apart and I experience this as an entanglement of the personal and the objective. I experience a new relationship between the personal and the objective, between the emotional and the rational, in a dynamic that itself is constantly accelerating.

The problems and contradictions thus seem to be as purely personal difficulties, or even personal embarrassment, about which I had better not speak. In reality, however, a general mechanism is being perpetrated via me as a person: in my thoughts, feelings and deeds. It is a mechanism that discloses itself in each and every individual in a specifically different - indeed individual - way.

3.2. The Mechanism of Added Value

The self-organising process is nothing other than the processing of both momenta of work - i.e. the use value and the valorisation value - in my practical doing in the business unit. During the course of this process, no matter what the activity, the following questions automatically arise: What value does this particular activity really add? Can we afford the cost of this activity?

These issues govern the daily activities of the "dependent independent employees" in the company for it is their task to ensure the competitiveness of their business unit. And so a third question proceeds from the entrepreneurial function of their actions: How can we concentrate on that which really adds value?

A further idea is implicit in the practical doings of the independent dependent worker: "If possible, we should outsource all other aspects - in the interest of our unit's survival." In that thought, the outsourcing of low value-added activity seems to be in my interest. I perceive the danger of the business unit failing on the market as worry about my own existence, a worry that demands hard entrepreneurial decisions from the employees themselves.

Thus I confuse the entrepreneurial interests of the business unit with my own interests, again automatically. As such, my thoughts are aimed against myself. I am simultaneously the actor and the potential victim of this way of thinking. It is I taking the tough entrepreneurial decisions that could potentially affect me, myself.

The dependent independent employees in the company are well aware of the toughness of these decisions. The whole thing is distinctly unpleasant but, as a rule, they do not see any alternative. "What can we do? At the end of the day, the business unit has got to survive on the market". The creation of use value and valorisation are only an abstraction. Yet this abstraction starts to assume an all determining influence on the thoughts and the feelings of the people in that unit. As if of its own accord, thought begins to limit itself to the circle of entrepreneurial alternatives.

3.3. The "Me As Process Function" Mechanism

What value does this particular activity really add? Can we afford the cost of this activity? - questions to which relations within the company are increasingly being subjected. But this is not merely a one-off process; it's a process of permanent and ongoing restructuring.

Within the context of this reconstruction, relations between individuals increasingly turn into relations between service givers and service takers. This mechanism affects the dependent but autonomous company employees in such a way that they react as a process function themselves. People begin to incorporate the process standpoint into their language:

Make me a better offer or I shall take my custom to another service provider! ... that is the aggressive customer stance;

Which customers really make me a profit? I ought to focus on the profitable customers and create low cost channels for the others! ... that is the aggressive supplier stance.

Processing both of these standpoints leads to mutual relations being interpreted entirely in economic terms. Human relations are increasingly turning into nothing other than service giver and service taker relations. And that leads, in turn, to the individual continually having to prove the current market value of his or her competence, no matter where. Nothing is certain any more. Nothing endures. Life is becoming a permanent struggle for the survival of my function and my business unit.

3.4. The Peer Pressure Mechanism

The employees in a business unit are now supposed to ensure the economic survival of their unit on the market. If the success of their unit is at risk, the new dynamic here will turn out to be something that can endanger the individual person as well. This threat does not come from the entrepreneur or from management, but from the employee him/herself. It is the phenomenon of an unbelievable toughness and ruthlessness among colleagues: peer pressure.

Peer pressure is based on the new dual role of the employees and can, for this very reason, be self-engendered. It follows from my activity in the dual role that the conflict of interest between capital and labour takes place in my head. I myself have to come to tough entrepreneurial conclusions that might potentially affect me, myself. The creation-of-value perspective leads directly to the division of the people in my business unit into two categories: the "dispensables" and the "indispensables". And once again, when the going does get tough, the question will automatically arise as to whether "we" can continue to afford the cost of the "dispensables". Our worries about the economic survival of the unit come out as existential angst - a fear for our livelihoods - and this fear can very quickly change into anger at or even hatred of all those in the unit who do not pull their weight and who, therefore, are dragging the others down.

Peer pressure can also be engendered by my helplessness in the face of handling my own fears. If I cannot come to terms with my own fears and thus cannot recognise the reason for my fears, or if I am plainly unable to admit that I have fears, then it is precisely at this point that my fears will transform into anger at all those who are not pulling their weight, dragging the others down, putting us all at risk.

Once this dynamic of exclusion sets in, another angst will ensue, as if of its own accord: the fear of being excluded oneself. The fear that I suddenly no longer belong, that all at once everyone is against me. Because of this, I join in when pressure builds up on others, or at least, I don't do anything to hinder it. The consequence of this mechanism is

clear: the working climate in the company becomes more and more aggressive (Glissmann/Peters 2001: 60 - 80).

4. The Assertion of My Interests

4.1. The Assertion of Interests under the Old Form of Entrepreneurial Hegemony

The old form of entrepreneurial hegemony was easily identifiable as hegemony. The entrepreneur or the top managers would simply give their middle managers their instructions and they, in turn, would hand the instructions down to the doing level. In a nutshell, this is a system of order and obeys: it is a human relationship based on coercion. In times of conflict the employees define themselves not just as dependent on but also as subject to the command of the entrepreneur. They are united as the receivers of orders and the enactors of instructions.

Entrepreneurial decisions, on the one hand, and objective, factual work on the other, are carried out by different persons. This is why all the conflicts between the use value aspect of work and the valorisation value of work appear as conflicts among different persons. The difference between the company's interests and the interests of the dependent but autonomous employees is relatively easy to understand.

But even under the old form of entrepreneurial hegemony, a specific autonomy of work did exist. This sense is so well developed among white-collar workers, for example, that they do not perceive themselves as the recipients of orders. This old kind of autonomy thus needs to be exactly defined if we are to grasp the difference between it and the new autonomy at work (Peters 1997: Sections 2.4 and 3.4).

The old autonomy is closely linked to a degree of freedom within the system - the amount of leeway, so to speak, for decision-making and action. Within this limit, white-collar workers do not receive instructions, they can take autonomous decisions. But let us define that more closely. The white-collar worker is faced with a question something like: What instructions would my boss give me in this particular situation if he were here to give me the instructions? All the white-collar worker has to do is anticipate the instructions and then carry out the instructions so anticipated. Leeway is thus embedded within the system of instructions.

The following example should clarify the difference between the old and the new autonomy at work. For example, it could happen that a white-collar worker performs his work professionally, but on the basis of an entrepreneurial wrong decision. The result of his work is consequently worthless. But that is not his problem; it is the entrepreneur's problem. However, this example changes drastically when we consider the new form of entrepreneurial hegemony.

4.2. The Assertion of Interests under the New Form of Entrepreneurial Hegemony

A definition of the new form of entrepreneurial hegemony has already been given in the course of this discussion. The new form of entrepreneurial hegemony is anchored within a structure whereby the employees are confronted with the prevailing conditions of their business unit. They are expected to decide, they have to decide themselves, what is entrepreneurially correct and then implement it - assuming they have recognised the entrepreneurially correct thing to do. This set-up has nothing at all to do with the leeway within an instruction system. It is qualitatively very different.

Under these new conditions, the Works Council soon begins to realise - with ever increasing bewilderment - that it is the employees themselves who are undermining the arrangements originally made for their protection. They are prepared to work non-stop, as it were, without management having to tell them to. If the Works Council were now to intervene, then the employees would feel that they were being hindered in their pursuit of their own (!) interests and purposes. Why do the employees do this? Why do they act against their own interests? It is precisely this question that is so difficult for anyone to answer: what really is in my interest?

We have already discussed this as part of the value creation mechanism.

To understand the new, it is important to realise that we are here not dealing with an illusion or with a trick; we are dealing with self-delusion. If it were an illusion, I would only need to expose it and the trick would no longer work. The deluded would be freed from their delusion. Self-delusion, by contrast, is something completely different. Even if I see through that self-delusion, it will continue. Mere understanding is not much help. I shall have to change my behaviour so that, with the passage of time, I can eventually overcome the delusion.

4.3. The Me Perspective

Under the new form of entrepreneurial hegemony, I myself am subject to inevitable self-delusions, delusions that I myself must handle. The me perspective is of crucial importance here. But I cannot handle things myself - all alone in my lonely room - but only in communication with other individuals. So even though I am having an individual argument with myself, I will only be able to settle that argument in the course of a collective process of communication with other individuals.

Or, to state it more explicitly, I, as a dependent independent employee at the company, must ask myself, day by day, decision after decision, "Do I want what I want as a entrepreneurial function or do I want it

myself?" My own will is instrumentalized for corporate purposes by the new form of hegemony and is, as a result, ambivalent.

In much the same way, I must ask myself: "What is in my interest as an employee and what is in the company's interest?" And here, too, I have to pose the question case by case and give a concrete answer in each individual case. If I don't, then I will automatically lose myself and my interests in the new dynamism of self-organising processes.

Self-organising processes arise of their own accord when top management creates certain "faits accomplis". The new dynamic among the employees also arises of its own accord, whether it is in the pleasant form of fun and enthusiasm or in the more unpleasant form of existential angst and peer pressure. (Normally, of course, there is a constant vacillation between "really good" and "really bad".) This confusion of the company's interest with one's own interest arises of its own accord, too.

However, breaking with the new mechanisms and throwing off the shackles of self-delusion do not come about of their own accord! And it is at this point where works councils representatives can define their new task.

4.4. Me as a Member of the Works Council

It is part of a Works Council member's self-image that he or she is occupied with the problems of other people. Members of the Betriebsrat enter into arrangements with the company and these arrangements protect the employees against unjustified management instructions. Such a self-image is of course completely acceptable when one is concerned with protecting the employees against the actions of others.

Under the new form of entrepreneurial hegemony, however, management instructions are replaced by the application of market pressures: the employees themselves become the driving force.

Works Councils often react with the formula of "We works council members must now protect the employees against themselves". Though this, in my opinion, is just not possible. I can't protect people against themselves! Each and every individual must learn to protect themselves against themselves.

And, as I say, this is not feasible on one's own; it is only feasible if individuals come to an understanding with one another. It is essential that we encourage such mutual support among individuals in their learning process and devise suitable ways to do so.

For me, as a Works Council member, this means first and foremost that I must stop talking about other people's problems and start talking about my own. After all, even though I am a Works Council member, the

position I find myself in is not fundamentally different from that of the other employees.

In Germany members of a works council have the right to carry out their works council related activities during their working hours. In locations with 300 and more employees at least one individual can work full-time as a works councillor.

If I am such a member who is detached for full-time Works Council's activities, then you might think I cannot be placed under pressure. But all the time the questions arise: What will happen to my specialist skills if I don't use them for a number of years? Will my skills retain their market value? At what age can I risk applying to be released from full-time work?

Those Works Council members who are not permanently detached from their work are obviously torn between the job they were trained to do and their work for the Works Council. Let me give you an example:

A tutor at an IBM college is also a member of the Central Works Council (CWC). If it is adequately prepared and followed up, a CWC meeting requires about one week. During that time, however, the tutor could hold a course at the IBM College and bring in, say, DM 50,000 in fees - calculated at 20 participants paying DM 2,500 each.

Now, in view of the disinvestment that this particular unit, an IBM college, is threatened with, the tutor's colleagues might well launch into the following discussion:

- Is your CWC work this week really worth DM 50,000?
- Is it not more important for the survival of the college that you stay and hold the course?

The right to be released from work for Works Council related duties is, needless to say, untouched. And the manager concerned has "absolutely no problem" with Works Council activities. Yet being entitled to leave his professional work does not help this particular member of the CWC at all. As an individual person, he has been landed with a huge problem. He is faced with considerable pressure from his own colleagues to justify his actions.

So: even as a Works Council member, I am exposed to pressure from the same mechanisms that affect all my workmates. When I address a Works Council meeting and refer to myself, I am perfectly free to say "Speaking as an employee" and not necessarily "Speaking as a member of the Works Council".

4.5. Me as an Employee

If I - as both an employee and Works Council representative at one and the same time - do not learn to address my own problems, then I won't

be of much use to the other people in the company as they attempt to come to terms with their problems. But to change one's own doing and one's own perception of one's self is very difficult and - initially - very confusing.

Yes, I am talking about myself - and is anyone out there interested? Won't I get the reaction of "Forget all these personal issues, let's get down to brass tacks"? The point is: if I adopt that attitude, I won't be able to even grasp the core problem with the new work - the core problem being that everyone has to take decisions day in, day out, and behave in a practical way.

I can only grasp the new mechanisms affecting my person if I say "me". But if I - as both an employee and Works Council representative at one and the same time - stand up at a Works Council meeting and say "me" in the sense of "me as an employee", then that's not much of a success. For, as an employee, I am service giver and service taker; as an employee I'm only a process function. The statement "me as a function" will not get me much further either. It's only with the formulation of "me as myself" or "me as an individual" that progress is to be made.

4.6. Me as an Individual

This is the actual difference within the first person approach: me as a function (= Works Council representative, employee) OR me as an individual. Two completely different perspectives, and the perspective difference is crucial if I, working under the conditions of a self-organising process, am not to be swept along by the new dynamic.

- "Me as a function" means:
My life is a means to an end, the end being the survival of the business unit.
- "Me as an individual" means:
My work and my wage or salary are the means to an end, the end being my individual life.

It is the perspective of my own life from which I consider the daily decisions at work. And this perspective is the essential starting point if my individual interest is to be set against that of the company - assuming, that is, that I want to find out what I myself really want (and not just me as a corporate function).

These questions are crucial for me as an individual, but alone, isolated, I cannot answer them. To do that, I need to communicate with others.

4.7. Communication Processes from Individual to Individual

As a service taker, I can face my colleagues as a service giver and bully them, aggressively demanding that they "pull their weight".

Alternatively, I could speak to them "as an individual to individual" about the work situation, i.e., about how I want to handle it and how the colleagues want to handle it. That is a fundamental difference.

However, such communication between colleagues is not going to appear automatically. On the contrary, our experience in Duesseldorf shows that a countervailing power is an absolute sine qua non if such communication is to take place at work. The initiatives taken and work carried out by a works council can be decisive here and so create that countervailing power.

By 1994, the philosopher Klaus Peters has begun to recognise the need for such communication processes, but his ideas sounded somewhat far-fetched at the time. How are you supposed to set about creating a communication process in a company with a workforce of 600 (such as IBM Duesseldorf)? Fortunately, we succeeded in the action "Month of November" 1997. It is now time to try and understand how that came about.

5. Discoveries Made during the Month of Reflection

5.1. The Starting Point

In September 1997, an IBM Works Councils Meeting established that the phenomena of pressure and endless work could no longer be dismissed as a transient phase. Five years after reorganisation, these phenomena had simply become permanent factors. All the Works Council members were of one mind: Things could not go on like this.

One older member, a sales representative, stepped up to the microphone to say "What we need at IBM is a month of reflection!" This unusual idea immediately appealed to all those present. Our colleague had articulated something that we had all been thinking. But what exactly would a Month of Reflection turn out to be?

As it happened, we members of the Duesseldorf Works Council were due to attend an internal conference, the week after that meeting. So we spent two days discussing everything from this new angle: all the discoveries we had made and all the conclusions we had come to. After all, "on reflection" ("Zur Besinnung kommen") means: I can see through the mechanisms that are being perpetrated, I can break the mould, I can stop for a pause. For all that, I still need a push to get me going, to get me really thinking.

And so our idea was that we would discuss these processes from the "me" perspective. What's happening to me? What, as a matter of fact, am I doing here? What do I really want? We decided to write a number of articles in the first person, all of which close with the questions: Have

you ever experienced this situation? How do you handle it? What changes ought to be made to the prevailing conditions?

One of the texts - about a page long and entitled "Work without End" - did in fact have a genesis of over a year. At our 1996 conference we had already discussed our experiences with work and the new mechanisms, the results being logged in minutes covering more than four pages. In the months to follow we continually revised that text until we came up with the preliminary version of "Work without End".

We then sent this as a note via the IBM Internal Communications System to all 600 colleagues in Duesseldorf and asked for their feedback, assuring them that we, the Works Council reps., would make the replies anonymous before setting up a discussion forum. We received a whole string of messages, many of them personal.

5.2. Text Examples: About Myself

Another text that gave much food for thought during that Month of Reflection was to play a special role: "My Work as Project Leader", in which a female colleague demonstrated unbelievable skill and sensitivity in thinking her own work situation through, in analysing how she came to find herself in nothing less than a no-win situation. At one level, her work was successful; at the other she was continually plagued by a bad conscience and self-doubt. She took a close look at her fear for her livelihood and eventually came to the conclusion that, though her fears were superficially entirely unjustified, they were nonetheless real for all that.

What is impressive about this text is the rigor with which the author thinks through the effects of these mechanisms on her own person. Despite being personal, her text has something of great general significance, something that I as an individual can only work out in a personal appropriation of myself. Something objective develops that urges me as a reader to think things through in a similar way and perceive how these mechanisms are affecting me - if in a completely individual and completely different way.

5.3. Communicative Processes amongst Individuals

These texts and the publication of the anonymous replies led to people in our company to talk about things which individuals had previously judged to be an individual failing or an individual embarrassment and which, as a result, were either not mentioned or not allowed to penetrate one's consciousness.

Following this period of written responses and time to think, we in the Works Council organised several meetings for the Month of Reflection.

- Reflecting on my rights (with a lawyer)
- Reflecting on my health (with a doctor)
- Reflecting on my new dual role (with the philosopher Klaus Peters).

And so it was that, at these meetings, various colleagues began to speak openly about their fears and how they had tried to deal with them. Engineers listened to colleagues from sales and distribution and vice versa. The old hands listened - perhaps for the first time ever - to how their younger colleagues saw things. All in all, this was a highly significant event since at IBM it was not normal for people to speak out about their problems. Well, that threshold had now been crossed.

A few months later, we summarised as follows.

The crucial insights of these weeks in November 1997 were: 'My individual problems are not personal failings. I'm personally going through a general phenomenon that others are also experiencing. Of course, everybody is experiencing this problem in their own individually unique way, which is why everybody will have to find their own individual solution. But we can each learn from one another to find his or her own way'.

5.4. The Works Council as a Movement

Soon after the Month of Reflection - on 12 December 1997 to be precise, outside the canteen - we Works Council reps. distributed a leaflet on the theme of "What now? How can I make reflection part of my everyday life?"

The Leaflet:

Your Works Council would like to propose a change in how Works Council work is structured. We Duesseldorf workers should use the Works Council Elections [of March 1998] to form large teams of interested colleagues. Each team would then put itself forward as a closed list.

Are you willing to join? And how much time would you be prepared to give? With your name on the list - whether at the top or nearer the bottom - you can choose one of these options: regular involvement (more or less); for a few weeks or months at a time (project based); in a focus group centred on a topic you find interesting; or just generally as part of the information chain.

In this way, we Duesseldorf employees could create for ourselves a flexible and permanent form of works council activity. I can join when I've got time but I can break off if I have other priorities. I can work on those topics that really interest me. I can decide the type and amount of activity.

If, here at the Duesseldorf company, every fourth or third member were

to join, the boundaries between Works Council and colleagues would become less rigid. Works Council activity would no longer mean "I am doing something for the others" but rather "I'm doing something for myself - with others who are also doing something for themselves"!

Over the next few months and years, we will discover and invent new forms of working and new ways of determining our interests so that, ultimately, we can make a reality of our interests and bring about a real change to our situation.

At the Works Council elections held in March 1998, two lists (friendly rivals) ended up campaigning and no fewer than 124 of 580 employees stood as candidates for the Works Council. A new form of work began to take shape.

5.5. My Life as Criterion and Measure

At the centre of the "reflection" campaign lay an attempt to counteract the (assumed) straitjacket effects of the global market and of work without end. During the Month of Reflection it became clear that it was me and my life that would have to be set against this global market logic. Anything less than my life is not enough!

The political idea behind the "reflection" campaign consisted of individual employees intervening in the company on a daily basis, applying themselves as criterion and measure.

I channel the decisions I take every day at work into my life perspective. Consequently, my individual life become an end in itself, while the twin factors of working and earning money become a means to an end, that end being my life.

In this way, I intervene in that dynamic that reduces my life to being the mere means to an end, this particular end being survival on the global market. I thus need to question the sense and purpose of my individual life as a reference point in order to start tackling the contradictions of working and earning a salary - and this in my own interests.

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Stress among Non-Manual Workers in Japan

By Tadashi Oyanagi, Japan Council of Metalworkers' Unions

Dramatic changes in workplace environment and increased stress factors in non-manual workplaces

Japan continues to suffer from a long-term economic slowdown and stagnation since the bubble burst in Spring 1991. It has truly been a lost decade. The government's various emergency economic measures, adding only to an enormous cumulative debt, have hardly proved effective. Meanwhile working people and their families are faced with employment, livelihood and future uncertainties. In the face of a major paradigm shift of social economy, there is a sharp line drawn between mature and declining industries on the one hand and, on the other, growth and new industries. However, there is a lack of smooth transfer of capital and labour from the first to the latter, contributing to social instability. Even within the same company there is an increasing shift of personnel from declining to growth sector workplaces. This has caused relocations, transfers, personnel on loan, long-term so-called business trips, including to foreign destinations, leaving the family behind. This has disrupted the work environment and family life, to say the least.

To compound matters, rising international competition has forced companies to focus on cost reduction and delivery management, which have placed tremendous pressure on the workforce to reach unprecedented levels of high performance.

On the other hand, corporations are implementing drastic structural reforms for survival, leaving them little choice but to review lifelong employment, seniority wage system and internal recruitment, which are major terms of working conditions. With regard to employment, corporations are actively opting for the use of part timers and workers on short working hours, as well as using workers from external labour markets. In particular, the active utilization of short-term workers has undermined the relative position of full time workers. Where wages are concerned, corporate strategy seems to be to decrease the weight of seniority-based wages in favor of those based on merit. Under an objective management scheme, the onus is on the workforce to deliver the result. This has tended to increase the already long working hours, undermining solidarity and collaboration among fellow workers and thus contributing to tension in the workplace. Japan's notorious "*Karoshi*," or death from overwork, continues to be a serious issue.

Bonus is today increasingly tied to corporate performance, which, in turn, is translated to reflect individual merit and performance. There is a sense of uncertainty as regards the annual total wage receivable.

There is also a rapid development in the way information technology (IT) is used. The need to keep up with technological innovation is adding to mental and physical pressures for the workers concerned. Moreover, the use of IT has drastically reduced the manufacturing and marketing processes, encouraging restructuring of redundant workplaces and middle management. This means reduction of employment and a mismatch between the new jobs created by IT and those lost as a result of it. It is rightly expected that there will be a discrepancy in working conditions between those who can make use of IT and those who cannot. All this adds to continuous tension with regard to employment, wages and retraining.

Ageing of the population continues in Japan at a rapid pace so that social responses have not kept up with the emerging super-aging society. The elderly are caught in insecurity concerning their pensions, medical care and nursing needs. They are doubly hit by their inability to keep up with the rapid changes in their jobs and at the workplace. For those over sixty years of age, the fear of not being able to find or keep their job, or anxiety about their health are serious problems. These are some of the problems working people feel must be resolved before they retire. There is no doubt that a shift to a superior welfare society is urgently needed. This means that labour unions have enormous social responsibilities.

Current Status

1. Data from "Karoshi Hotline" National Network

June 1988 - June 1992

1. Total Number of counseling cases	
Total	2,983
Compensation for Industrial Accidents	2,177
Of which cases involving death	1,416
Overworking and Karoshi Preventive action	758
Other matters	48

2. Reasons (Illnesses)* of Compensation for Industrial Accidents	%
(Breakdown for the above 1-1. Case)	
Cerebrovascular disease	39.2
Subarachnoid hemorrhage	16.4
Cerebral hemorrhage	16.3
Cerebral thrombosis/ Cerebral infarction	6.5
Heart Ailments	27.3
Cardiac infection	10.0
Acute heart failure	17.3

* Refers to the illness of the person being counseled

3. Breakdown by gender	%
for the above 1-1. Cases	
Male	94.3
Female	4.5
Unknown	1.2

4. Breakdown by age**	%
Under 30 years of age	6.4
30-39 years of age	11.6
40-49 years of age	25.8
50-59 years of age	26.0
60 years of age and above	5.6
Unknown	24.6

5. Breakdown by industry***	%
Manufacturing	19.0
Construction	16.8
Transportation	15.5
Wholesale/ retail	8.5
Service	7.6
Education	4.0
Finance/ Insurance	3.5
Electrical appliances	3.0
Media and information	1.4
Others (including unknown)	20.7

6. Breakdown by position in a company***	%
Regular employee	44.2
Middle management	22.5
Contract worker	9.6
Senior management	6.1
Executive	1.9
Representative of company	1.5
Unknown	14.2

7. Breakdown by occupation***	%
Manual	31.1
Clerical	12.5
Sales	12.1
Driver	11.8
Engineer	8.3
Research	1.4
Other	14.3
Unknown	8.4

Source: The office of the National Council for Karoshi Victims

** Refers to the age composition of cases involving counseling for the above 1.1. (2,983 cases) and 1.2. (758 cases);

*** Data provided by the National Network for the 2-year period (June 90-92)

2. Rengo Survey: Occupation and status of employment in cases of "sudden death from illness"

1. Breakdown by occupation	Male	Female
Total number of people dying suddenly from illness	589	208
	%	%
Employed	81	41
of whom:	%	%
Manual and transport workers	28	13
Clerical, engineer and managerial	25	7
Retail and services	16	13
Fishing, farming and forestry	10	5
Other	2	3
Housewife		47
Unemployed	19	12

2. Breakdown by employment status	Male	Female
Number of people employed	478	86
	%	%
Employees	65	62
Self-employed	34	13
Family workers	1	24
Unidentified	0	1

Source: Rengo Survey

Tension and Uncertainty in the Workplace

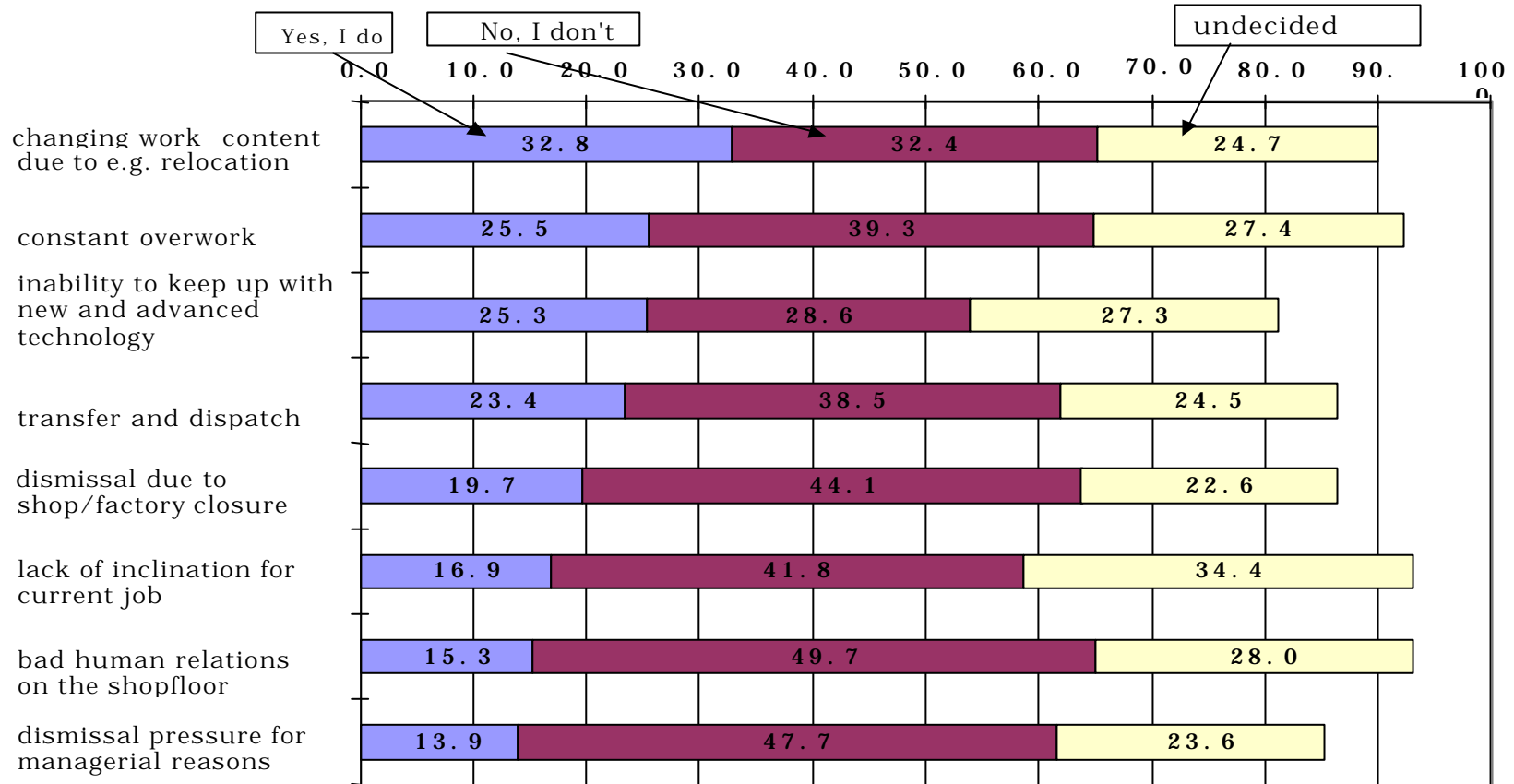


Table 4: Tension and Uncertainty in the Workplace

Breakdown of answers "Yes, I feel" by industry and by size of establishment

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	Total number of answers	
	changing work content due to e.g. relocation	constant overwork	ability to keep up with new and advanced technology	transfer and dispatch	dismissal due to bankruptcy or shop/factory closure	lack of inclination for current job	bad human relations at the workstation	dismissal pressure for managerial reasons		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Total	23.4	19.7	13.9	25.5	32.8	15.3	16.9	25.3	25,364	
by industry	1. manufacturing (metalworking)	27.1	25.4	15.6	24.6	31.5	17.1	18.2	23.9	5,464
	2. manufacturing (chemical)	27.2	19.9	12.3	22.9	33.2	13.8	15.1	23.2	3,086
	3. manufacturing (other)	20.6	28.1	13.8	22.7	29.6	16.1	17.2	21.8	2,311
	4. natural resources and energy	24.9	13.6	12.8	16.0	37.1	13.7	16.3	25.2	946
	5. transport	24.2	19.6	14.0	31.5	26.2	18.5	18.3	24.5	2,720
	6. information and publishing	32.8	13.6	17.2	21.6	46.5	14.5	20.5	36.8	924
	7. commerce and distribution	22.9	28.9	18.3	30.3	31.3	14.5	20.1	20.4	1,350
	8. general services	19.7	28.4	17.7	29.8	30.8	17.6	19.9	23.9	880
	9. finance, insurance and real estate	16.1	14.2	14.7	32.7	33.0	11.1	14.5	23.9	1,190
	10. construction, materials and forestry	23.7	18.5	16.2	21.3	31.4	10.8	15.5	21.5	860
	11. other non-manufacturing industries	12.6	23.6	18.4	22.8	30.1	19.7	15.1	22.8	478
	12. public and civil services	19.3	8.6	9.5	25.7	36.6	13.9	14.8	30.8	4,868
by size of establishment	less than 99 employees	11.7	30.3	15.2	25.8	20.5	21.0	20.7	24.4	2,356
	more than 100	15.0	23.6	13.3	24.1	27.5	17.8	19.3	25.9	3,635
	more than 300	22.6	21.9	15.1	25.2	32.1	15.9	17.5	24.6	4,083
	more than 1,000	25.5	19.3	14.4	26.7	34.4	13.9	16.4	23.9	7,004
	more than 5,000	29.5	14.1	12.7	24.9	37.9	13.3	14.9	26.6	78,223

Source: Rengo Survey

Table 5: Tension and Uncertainty in the Workplace

Breakdown of answers "Yes, I feel" by gender and by occupation

		1. changing work content due to e.g. relocation	2. constant overwork	3. ability to keep up with new advanced technology	4. transfer and dispatch	5. dismissal due to bankruptcy of shop/factory closure	6. lack of inclination for current job	7. bad human relations at workstation	8. dismissal pressure for managerial reasons	Total number of answers
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Male	Total	24.5	20.6	14.0	26.6	32.9	15.4	17.1	24.7	21,512
	1. manual workers	26.2	25.8	14.8	24.7	31.6	16.5	18.6	27.6	5,857
	2. clerical	24.1	15.2	12.2	22.4	37.3	13.3	15.8	24.7	5,455
	3. professionals and engineers	24.8	19.5	12.4	27.1	32.7	15.0	14.0	20.4	3,988
	4. transportation workers	22.4	21.5	15.0	35.8	25.1	19.4	19.3	24.4	2,259
	5. commercial, retail and service	25.9	23.3	18.2	31.2	35.6	14.6	18.7	25.1	2,932
	6. other	17.5	14.5	11.9	23.3	28.1	14.3	16.9	24.6	928
Female	Total	16.9	14.6	13.0	19.5	31.9	15.2	16.1	28.7	3,780
	1. manual	15.2	24.5	16.4	20.1	27.8	22.9	19.9	23.1	428
	2. clerical	16.7	13.3	12.9	12.9	34.3	13.5	17.3	28.5	2,116
	3. professionals and engineers	14.7	7.1	8.6	33.2	25.7	12.3	9.3	34.7	536
	4. commercial, retail and service	21.6	24.4	18.4	28.8	35.3	19.8	18.4	30.2	430
	5. other	18.7	7.7	10.5	28.7	30.1	15.3	10.0	28.2	209

Source: Rengo Survey

Table 6: Tension and Uncertainty in the Workplace

		Yes, I feel	No, I don't feel	Undecided	I don't know	NA	Total number of answers
Total		22.4	41.5	24.4	9.2	2.6	20,209
Answer to the question "do you think your company's profit is the black?"	in the black	15.5	50.2	23.7	8.7	1.8	12,689
	almost no profit	28.4	29.2	28.5	10.3	3.6	1,921
	in the red	41.1	22.0	25.2	8.4	3.3	4,124
	Un-known	25.6	28.2	24.1	15.4	6.6	667

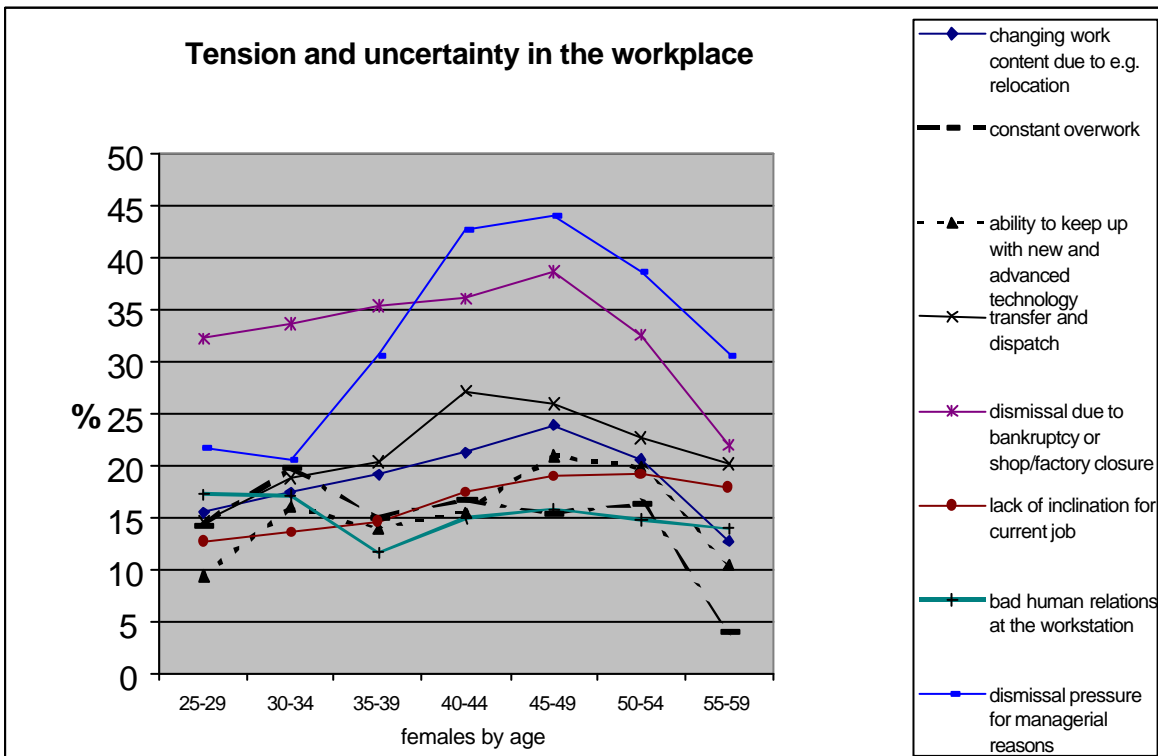
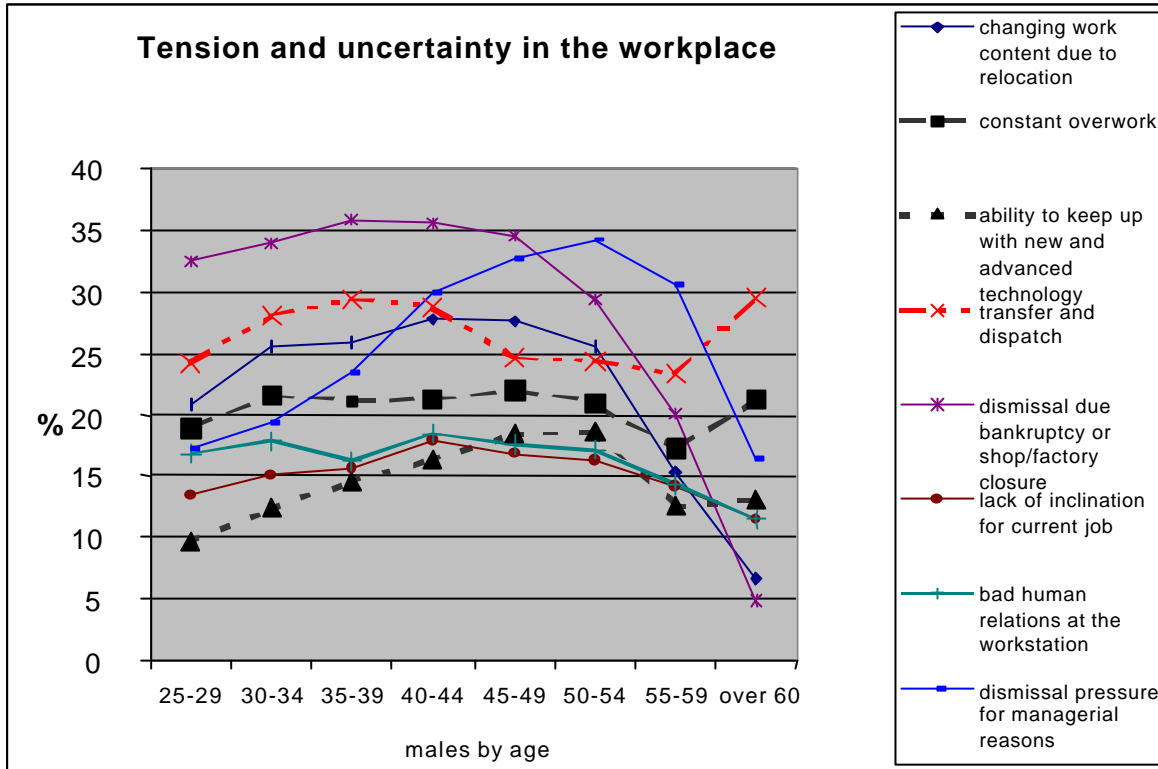
Source: Rengo Survey

Table 7: Tension and Uncertainty in the Workplace

Breakdown of answers "Yes, I feel" by gender and by age

		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.		
		changing work content due to e.g. relocation	constant overwork	ability to keep up with new and advanced technology	transfer and dispatch	dismissal due to bankruptcy or shop/factory closure	lack of inclination for current job	bad human relations in workshop	dismissal pressure for managerial reasons	Total number of answers	cumulative total
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Total		23.4	19.7	13.9	25.5	32.8	15.3	16.9	25.3	25,364	172.7
Male		24.5	20.6	14.0	26.6	32.9	15.4	17.1	24.7	21,512	175.8
Female		16.9	14.6	13.0	19.5	31.9	15.2	16.1	28.7	3,780	155.8
Male by age	less than 24	15.5	15.8	7.0	18.9	24.4	10.1	14.8	18.0	890	124.5
	25-29	20.8	18.9	9.7	24.2	32.5	13.4	16.8	17.2	3,226	153.5
	30-34	25.5	21.6	12.4	28.1	33.9	15.1	17.9	19.4	4,461	173.8
	35-39	25.9	21.1	14.6	29.3	35.9	15.6	16.2	23.4	4,350	182.0
	40-44	27.7	21.3	16.4	28.8	35.5	17.8	18.5	30.0	3,233	195.9
	45-49	27.6	22.0	18.4	24.7	34.5	16.8	17.5	32.7	2,543	194.2
	50-54	25.6	20.9	18.6	24.4	29.4	16.2	17.1	34.2	1,826	186.3
	55-59	15.3	17.3	12.5	23.3	20.1	14.2	14.3	30.5	859	147.5
	over 60	6.6	21.3	13.1	29.5	4.9	11.5	11.5	16.4	61	114.8
Female by age	less than 24	7.5	9.5	4.1	15.2	21.9	13.8	17.8	21.5	507	111.2
	25-29	15.5	14.2	9.4	14.7	32.3	12.8	17.3	21.7	1,014	137.9
	30-34	17.4	19.9	16.0	18.8	33.6	13.6	17.1	20.6	568	157.0
	35-39	19.1	14.9	13.9	20.4	35.3	14.7	11.6	30.7	388	160.6
	40-44	21.3	16.7	15.5	27.2	36.0	17.5	14.9	42.7	342	191.8
	45-49	23.8	15.3	20.9	26.0	38.7	19.0	15.8	44.0	411	203.6
	50-54	20.6	16.3	19.8	22.7	32.6	19.2	14.8	38.7	344	184.6
	55-59	12.7	4.0	10.4	20.2	22.0	17.9	13.9	30.6	173	131.8

Source: Rengo Survey



Report from the Ministry of Labour

- The ratio of workers who feel insecure, troubled and stressed from work and working life is increasing year after year. The 1997 survey reports that 63% of workers are exposed to work-related stress.
- The share of workers between 20 and 64 years of age who received medical care for mental disability reached 1.7 per cent.
- The share of workers who claim stress as a reason for taking sick leave is 45.6 per cent.
- Of those who claimed 1 month or longer sick leave, 15 per cent had mental disabilities.
- The Metropolitan Police Department reported that the breakdown by profession of suicide cases showed that suicides among managers and employed increased from 6,200 in 1997 to 8,700 in 1998.

4. From Labour White Paper 2000:

Use of computers and worker's health:

According to the Ministry of Labour "Survey on Technological Innovation and Work, 1998", 97.6 % of white collar management offices used computers and 90.2 % of workers did. Some 10.8 % of the workers felt they had not successfully adapted to computer work. A general tendency is for the number to increase with age. 39.6 % reported that the use of computers added to mental exhaustion and stress. Women more than men suffered from stress - 33.5 % among men and 39.6 % among women. A substantial 77.6 % had symptomatic signs of physical fatigue. At the office level, 28.5 % of offices said that an increased number of people complained of eye tiredness and neck and shoulder stiffness, while 5.4 % reported an increased number of complaints regarding mental stress. Only 9.6 % of offices surveyed conducted labour hygiene education. There is a need at the office level to analyse the condition of workers using computers and to enact appropriate measures. There is a considerable gap between workers and employers regarding the understanding of the present situation.

IMF-JC's programme (Secretariat recommendation)

1. Improving working conditions and response at the corporate level

1.1. Promote a movement towards building a pleasant workplace

1.1.1 Shorter working hours and encourage the use of paid holidays:

- Realize a discretionary work system
- Give attention to SOHO (small office- home office) workers
- Regulate night work
- Regulate shift work
- Establish the taking of longer holidays

- Realize flexible time
 - Abolish unpaid overtime work
- 1.1.2. Improve work environment:
- Check for (a) temperature and humidity; (b) noise; (c) smoke; (d) cleanness of the air; (e) peer contact; (f) place and time for relaxation; (g) good lighting; (h) spaciousness of workplace, etc.
- 1.1.3. Hold company responsible for work safety:
- Improve counseling ability of workplace management
 - Provide guidance for stress management
- 1.1.4. Train union workplace management on safety guidance and encourage qualification acquisition:
- 1.1.5. Provide regular health screening.
- 1.2. Enhance necessary measures for middle and senior age workers.
- 1.3 Enhance measures ensuring return to workplace.
- 1.4 Improve access to and use of information concerning job finding and transfer.
- 1.5 Review job classification and improve consultation to increase peer contact in work.
- 1.6 Enhance functioning of labour-management health and safety committee.
- 1.7 Enhance career counseling (increase privacy protection)

2. Reforming and expanding the social system

- 2.1. Enhancing medical care, treatment and counseling.
- 2.1.2. Improve and encourage use of available facilities.
- Local industrial health centers (services began in 1992). Services for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), Rengo survey shows that 74 % of them are not used
 - Industrial health promotion centers
 - Health Insurance Society
 - Industrial Accident Hospital Worker Mental Health Centre
 - Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association
 - Worker Health Maintenance Promotion Service Organization
 - The Occupational Health Promotion Foundation
 - Medical Doctors Association
 - Labour Hygiene Consultants
 - Mental Clinics
 - Regional Insurance Organizations
 - Consultation services: health of the mind consultation services

provided by labour unions; NPO organized "Inochi no Denwa (Life-line telephone consultation services)", etc.

- 2.2. Improve social security system-relax certification standards for potential beneficiary of comprehensive relief. Improve certification system.
- 2.3. Enhance measures to enable social re-participation.
- 2.4. Examine carefully past medical record and review appropriate workplace. (Define employer obligation and ensure appropriate response to worker's views and requests.)
- 2.5. Enhance access to information and consultation services for the individual worker to help him design a meaningful lifelong career.
- 2.6. Enhance functions and services of Regional Industrial Health Centre targeting SMEs.
- 2.8. Build and strengthen the legal system. Need for establishing international standards.
- 2.8. Develop nourishing industries that provide products offering comfort and security, soul-enriching experiences.
- 2.9. Enhance training and services to overcome digital divide:
 - Access to job-offer information
 - Enhance capability to be employable in IT-related jobs.

Stress and Burnout – An Indian Perspective

By Dilip Kumar Palit, Indian National Metalworkers' Federation

There have been a lot of discussions in India on the subject of stress and burnout so far as executives are concerned, but not much touching the non-manual workers. There is however no doubt that this is becoming an increasing concern, a growing problem for non-manual workers.

What is stress ?

Stress is a non specific response of the body to any demand made on it. It is a force of sufficient magnitude to distort or deform when applied to a system. Two major types of stress are : the stress involved in loss of a loved one or of a job or self-esteem that comes when a person's level of attachment is considerable. Such stress can generate symptoms of depression or anxiety, ill health and the like.

People seem to have a personal way of reacting to problems of stress. These are obsession, anxiety, alcohol-dependent, ulcers and various other types of physical and mental responses.

Stress is a topic that is discussed in the press, on radio and television and, in the process, a number of serious confusions are generated. "Executive stress", as stated above, is a familiar notion – but it is not so well known that non-manual workers equally suffer from stress induced by their work environment or family estrangement.

Stress management via exercises, meditation and assertiveness training are solutions purely in terms of individual's effects and willingness. Stress emanates to a large extent from the way work is organised, and it can only be prevented if worker seeks to have the work reorganised, collectively through their union.

"Stress" experienced by non-manual workers is examined under the following heads :

- (a) psychological reaction to stress
- (b) social response to stress
- (c) the physiological stress response and its health effects, i.e. high blood pressure, ulcers, etc.
- (d) measuring the psychological cost of stressful work
- (e) personal responses to stress
- (f) disease related coping behavior and stress symptom treatment
- (g) a trade union strategy to prevent stress

With respect to the industrial environment in India, sometimes non-manual workers have to take up manual jobs such as breakdowns and during implementation of priority jobs within scheduled time. Non-manual workers, like supervisors, technicians, managers are generally sandwiched between management and manual workers. Supervisors, clerks, sales representatives, managers and technicians generally suffer from the basic problem of tackling the managerial imperatives on the one side, and the workers' concern, on the other side, and that is why their stress is more. Indeed, they are to subsist between two opposing social forces, the expectations of management and the aspirations of the unionised workers.

(a) psychological reaction to stress:

Stress is normally experienced subjectively as fatigue, anxiety and depression. It sometimes exhibits as behavioral changes when people become hostile and aggressive. These are all signs or symptoms of stress, which indicate that there is something radically wrong with the job. The psychological reaction to stress is evaluated in terms of the concepts; mental load, fatigue and arousal. But when they are endured day after day on the face of a hostile manual worker and by a boring and monotonous job, they result in psychosomatic illness and ultimately leads to neurosis and deranged mental state. Quite literally, a job can drive a non-manual worker quite mad.

(b) Social response to stress

Along with anxiety, depression and conflict, stress at work can carry over into a non-manual workers family and social life. Marriage or relationship problems result in the social cost of a stressful working environment.

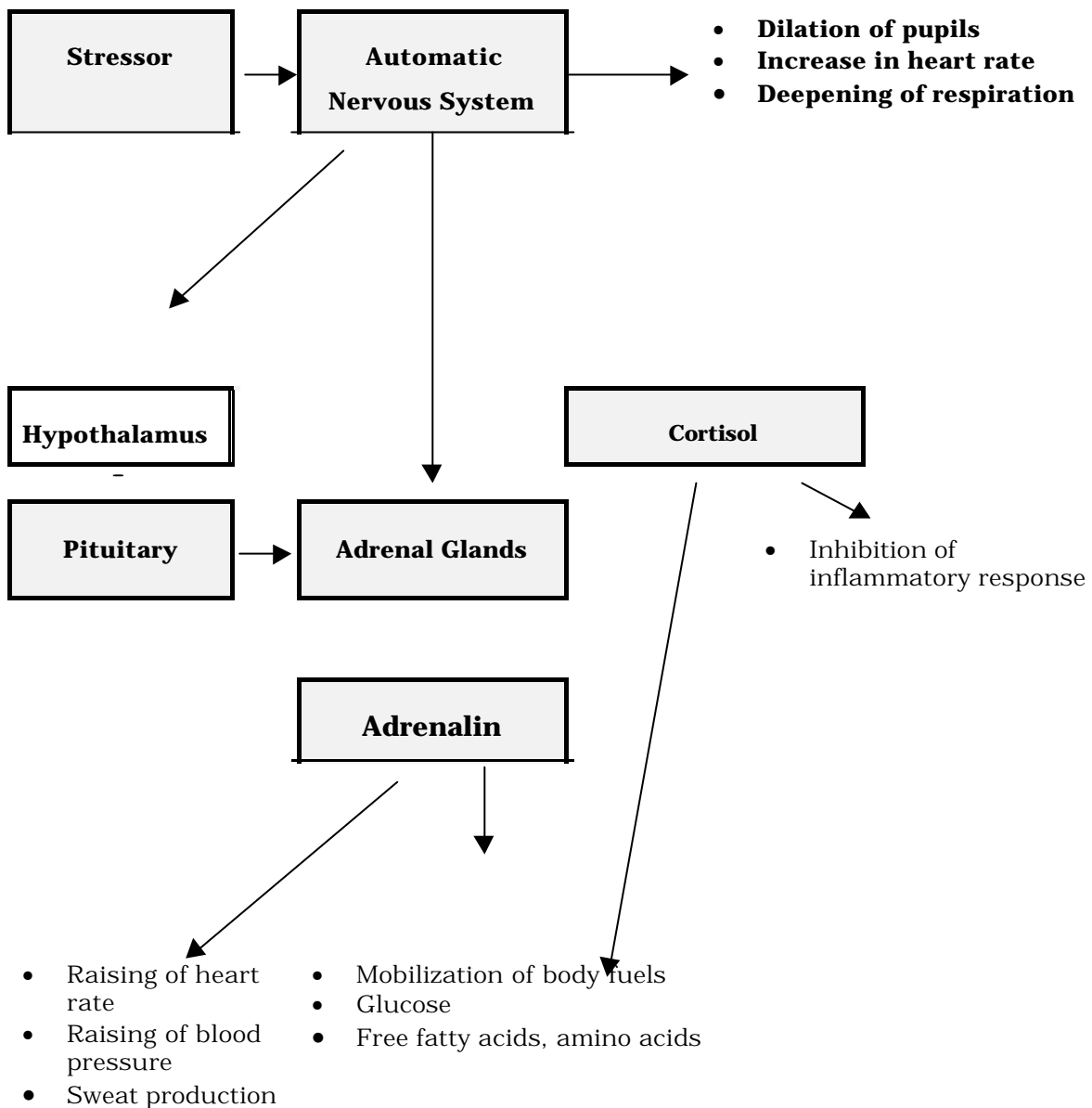
(c) Stress response and its health effects :

There is no accepted terminology as yet to describe the stress response. A model developed by Levi identifies the factors contributing to stress or stresses, which may vary, but the essential insight of the theory of stress is that the body's response is always the same.

STRESSORS	STRESS / STRAIN	LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES
i) Work load	Physical reactions/headaches/backache/cramps	Physical disorder – Heart disease, ulcer, colitis
ii) Work pressure – excessive pace, mechanical pacing	Psychological reactions – fatigue, anxiety, depressions, low self-esteem	Psychological disorders – depression, neurosis, insomnia
iii) Excessive overtime, shiftwork, monotonous sorting work, uncertain responsibilities	Behavioral reactions – smoking, drinking, impulsive and irrational acts	Social disorders – marriage breakdown , withdrawal
iv) Social isolation at work, poor physical environment (such as noise)	Social reactions – conflicts and isolation	Poor relationship

This response was entirely appropriate at earlier stages of our evolution – it involves mobilizing energy, increasing heart rate, preparing for absence of food, preparing to repair tissue damage and increasing the clotting factor in the blood.

However, in a noisy workshop or in a dull monotonous job, where the pressure to maintain production is intense or in a work situation full of conflict and poorly defined roles, then their bodies go into a virtual permanent state of "stress" and all these biological adaptations work against us. The whole sequence of responses may be shown in the following figures:



Prolonged high levels of cortisol and adrenaline under "stressful" working conditions may therefore lead to hypertension, fat deposition in blood vessels, reduced immune response and gastric ulcer.

(d) Long-term physical effects :

Effects include ulcers, high blood pressure and heart disease.

(e) Personal response to stress :

From the point of view of trade union safety representatives, this emphasis on individual responses and coping strategies is irreverent.

It distracts from the business of focusing on the real causes of stress and attempting to have them eliminated.

(f) Disease related coping behavior :

Under condition of work stress, it has been found that people smoke more, eat more, drink more alcohol and resort to drugs. These are all behavior patterns that are linked with exposure to stress.

Stress symptom treatment : The medical profession encourages people to cope with stress by prescribing tranquilizers and other drugs. Not only does this not tackle the underlined cause, but it leads to long term dependence and further health problems. The patient may find it difficult to give up the drugs even when the original source of stress is removed.

Women and stress : Most women in paid employment effectively work a double shift. As non-manual workers, in addition to their jobs at the machine shop or office, they also work at home. Primary problems seen by working women are tiredness, child care and housework – and not so much the demands of the job itself.

(g) Trade union strategy to prevent stress :

1. Identify whether there is a problem : safety representatives can establish whether stress is a problem in their workplace by conducting their own survey. This can be done by distributing health questionnaires or interviewing members in each case, focusing on such health issues as indigestion, headaches, high blood pressure, ulcers, anxiety, depression, insomnia. The work load factors to focus on such survey include (a) quantitative overload – too much to do, time pressure, respective work, paced work, one-sided job demands (b) qualitative underload – too narrow and one sided job content, lack of stimulus or job variety, no demand for creativity, problem solving or social interactions (c) lack of control – conflicts of roles, unclear procedures and job descriptions, lack of consultations, communications (d) payment system – piece work, bonuses, incentives and premiums.

The aim of the service is to establish whether there is any link between these work factors and the answers to questions concerning health.

2. Follow-up survey :

A more sophisticated survey would include measurements of psychological cost as described above. This involves a full scale survey using professional consultancy and analysis of hormone levels in urine.

3. Negotiate changes in work organisation.

4. Audit effectiveness of any change

Stress on non-manual workers is mainly caused by the person's perceptions and these are : (i) perceived uncertainty about the outcome of the event, (ii) perceived importance of the outcome of the event, and (iii) perceived ability to control the outcome of the event.

The first two mainly relate to the personality and attitude of the individual and not much can be done by the union, except offering "counseling" facilities. But a lot can be done by the union to tackle the last one and that is by arranging regular training programmes about the job, the work environment and the person's attitude orientation. In fact, exposure to such regular programmes will help confidence-building and the net result will enable the individual to develop a realistic perception towards the problem. And once the person develops an attitude of facing the problems instead of evading them, he will be more composed and more competent and more confident to confront stress situations.

Part two

*What is the Trade
Unions' Response?*

What are Trade Unions doing about this Increasing Problem?

By Barbro Sundqvist, SIF, Sweden

These are complicated issues, demanding sustained work at all levels, if we want to turn today's negative developments around. Unions can focus on the problems, start raising the level of information, demand action in terms of legislation, contacts and real measures in companies. It is also very important to make members aware of the situation, to activate them to participate in the work - otherwise we will never get the results we want.

Trade unions are generally very well aware of the problems. There is particular emphasis on the negative effects caused by downsizing in companies and resulting in lean businesses with increased workload and stress among our members.

A great deal is known about stress and its consequences, but we still need to learn more about it and are doing so by getting in touch with researchers and acquiring research results. In Sweden a large labour market survey is carried out every four years by the government - the latest was in 1999 - to find out what workers feel about their working environment. Many trade unions have also undertaken their own reviews. SIF has recently concluded a survey in which 2000 members were interviewed. We have previously examined the issue of working hours, including among managerial staff, which created a stir in a number of places in Europe.

The information provided by the survey is used to influence and develop existing legislation and adapting it to emerging new circumstances. The material is needed to develop new forms of aid to tackle the problems.

There is much material on psychological and social matters to make members aware of these issues and to provide support to local unions at the workplace, so that they too can engage in prevention. The importance of work organisation and leadership is often highlighted. Work organisation must have room for team development and social support.

SIF has made a CD-Rom with the name "Allt har sin tid" (There is a right time for everything). It describes the balance that must be struck between work/leisure/rest, and the repercussions if the proper balance is absent. It is a tool to assist individuals in thinking through their own situations.

In autumn 2001, we hope to introduce yet another, similar tool on our website. It is an environmental test which will enable individuals to compare their own situations with the ideal position, formulated to correspond with Swedish regulations, as well as with that of other SIF members. It can also be used as the basis for negotiating a programme of change in the workplace.

While producing tools of various kinds, Swedish trade unions are also trying to influence conditions to bring about changes in the workplace. In this year's round of collective bargaining for national agreements we have managed to agree with employers to establish working parties with representatives of both employers and trade unions. The purpose is to examine the situation and to propose measures that are appropriate to the needs of each sector. Matters relating to work organisation and leadership will, of course, be included.

There is legislation in Sweden on developing the working environment, which provides excellent support in trying to prevent stress and stress-related illnesses. The problem is that the law is not applied as it should in the workplace, because neither employers nor workers know enough about it.

SIF is starting to raise awareness among its members of the importance of introducing stress prevention measures. Unions must disseminate and provide more information to their members to enable them to demand that employers take the measures they are supposed to, according to current legislation.

Things are starting to happen in companies and we now need to contribute by spreading good ideas and developing efficient models of how work could be carried out.

Trade Union Strategies for preventing Workload and Stress in the Netherlands

By Jan Warning, FNV-Bondgenoten, Netherlands¹

1. Work-related stress in the Netherlands

Trade unions in the Netherlands have been facing the problem of work-related stress for some years. This is probably due to certain specific characteristics of the Dutch economy. Since the 1970's, the country has changed from an industrial economy to one primarily based on services. Due to the use of automation and highly skilled workers, the Netherlands has one of the highest levels of productivity in the world.

Although trade unions have been quite successful in the struggle to reduce working hours, this has been accompanied by an increase in almost hidden (unofficial and unpaid) overtime. Furthermore, companies have demanded much greater flexibility in work organisation and time schedules. The reduction of working hours, increased flexibility in work organisation and the use of new technologies have given an impulse to prosperity and lower level of unemployment, but there are also some negative aspects to this development.

According to surveys carried out by the European Foundation in Dublin, the Netherlands has the highest percentage of workers operating at high speeds and, during the period from 1990 to 1995, the rate of work increased more than in any other European country. The problems of workload and stress has led to a growing number of disability claimants. There are now almost one million workers receiving disability benefit in the country. One third of the people with disabilities are suffering from psychological complaints. The total cost of work-related stress for the whole Dutch economy is estimated to be 4.7 billion guilders each year (approx. 1.83 billion USD).

2. Need for a trade union instrument

In the last few years the sense of urgency to address the issue of work-related stress has increased, but trade unions have found it difficult to put this issue on the agenda at the company level. Employers use different arguments to avoid having to develop a strategy for the prevention of work-related stress, such as:

- "it is subjective";
- "people are only imagining the fact that they have complaints";
- "the problems are due to private circumstances";

¹ Head of the Unit on the Quality of Work at FNV, Jan Warning has written a dissertation in Dutch (with a summary in English) entitled "Trade Unions Influencing Work-Related Stress". This dissertation provides an evaluation of eight trade union initiatives in the service sector and examines why some trade union initiatives are more successful than others. .

- "one cannot measure the level of work-related stress".

These arguments are not very easy to refute for trade unionists. In fact, from a trade union point of view, there are two main problems to be overcome:

- 1) how can stress be put on the agenda at the company level?
- 2) how can it be kept on the agenda?

The trade union instrument "*Quick Scan Stress*" is a response to these questions. It helps keep the issue high on the priority list of the company for a longer time (until prevention measures have been taken), but this is not sufficient. For a prevention strategy to be successful on the shop floor, trade unions need planning, endurance and creativity.

3. Quick Scan Stress

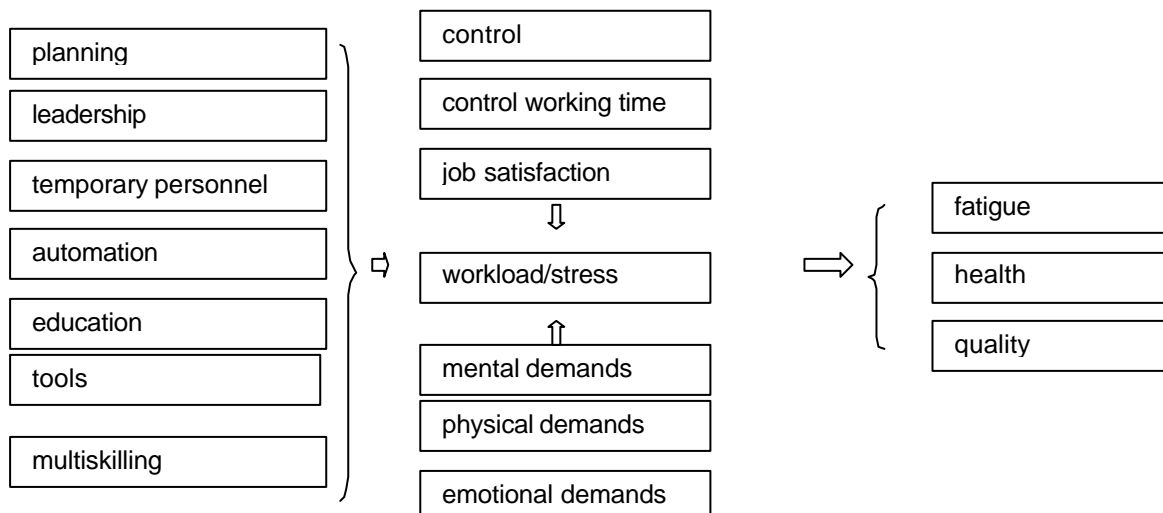
Quick Scan Stress is a research instrument intended for trade unions and works councils. It consists of a booklet with a questionnaire and an associated computer programme to analyze the results.

Copies of the questionnaire are distributed to workers in the company who have to complete it and return it to the works councils or trade unions. The data is entered in the computer (the computer programme contains possibilities for data entry). Once the content of the last questionnaire has been fed into the computer, within the space of two minutes, the programme produces a scientific report on work-related stress for the company concerned.

The cost for the software and the booklet are 140 Dutch guilders (around 60 Euro), which is not very expensive for such scientific research.

4. The theoretical model of the Quick Scan Stress

Quick Scan Stress has been developed from a theoretical model of how work-related stress is defined, its main causes, and the problems that result from it.



At the centre of the theoretical model is the level of workload or stress. The definition of stress is that workers do not have enough time or are unable to exert sufficient strength to accomplish the tasks that are required within a certain period. Quick Scan Stress poses eight questions about work-related stress. These eight questions represent a scientific scale of the level of stress. The information gathered provides an indication to management of the importance of stress within the company. It is possible to compare the results of a particular company with those derived from a reference group which consists of 1,500 workers in various branches within the Netherlands.

Quick Scan Stress also gives an indication of control over work issues within the company, including control of the work process, working time schedules, the level of autonomy and job satisfaction. If workers have some control over these aspects, they are less likely to suffer from the higher levels of stress which could lead to severe health problems. On the other hand, Quick Scan Stress also provides information about the gravity of the problems of mental, physical and emotional demands in the workplace. When workers are confronted with serious demands (whether mental, physical or emotional) and suffer from stress, the risk of health problems are much greater.

When work-related stress is combined with a high level of control, the consequences for workers' health are far less dramatic, but when it is combined with a demanding level of performance, the consequences are likely to be much more severe.

Furthermore, Quick Scan Stress provides an insight into the specific consequences of work-related stress within the company. Does stress lead to fatigue, health problems or quality problems? The latter is particularly important in discussions with management. When the trade union succeeds in demonstrating that stress leads not only to health problems for the workers but also to different kinds of quality problems (bad service, errors, lack of reliability, low sales, poor image) for the company, management is likely to be much more willing to embark upon a prevention strategy.

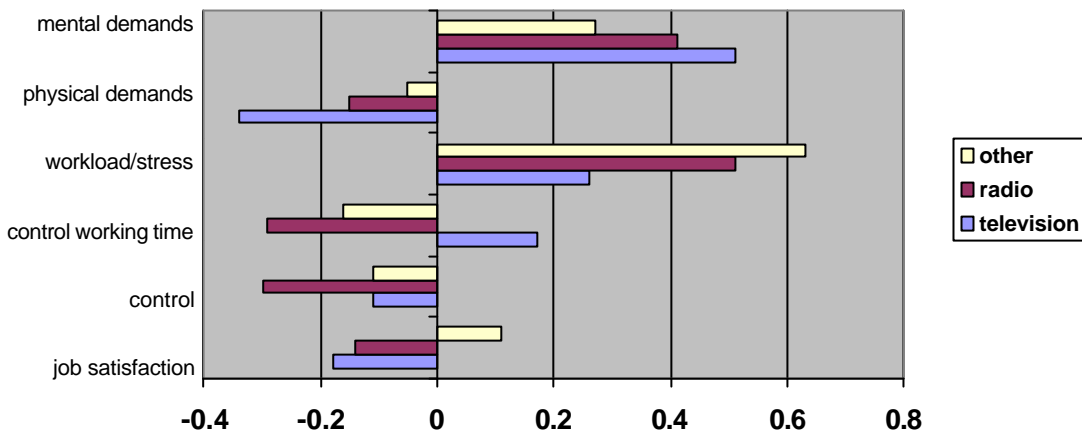
One of the most interesting features of the Dutch trade union instrument is that it provides an explanation of what are the main causes of stress within the company. Quick Scan Stress distinguishes seven main causes: problems with (1) planning, (2) leadership, (3) temporary staff, (4) automation, (5) education, (6) tools and (7) the division of labour where many multiskill functions are required. All of these causes can lead to stress. Of course it is possible that, in any specific company, there may be other causes than the ones listed above.

Nevertheless, it has been found that, in most companies where this instrument has been used, the trade unions or works councils consider

that Quick Scan Stress enables them to identify causes that correspond to the specific situation.

5. A graphical presentation of the findings of Quick Scan Stress

Below are some graphs concerning a specific company. It is a broadcasting company with two main departments - radio and television while a number of other smaller departments are grouped under "other".

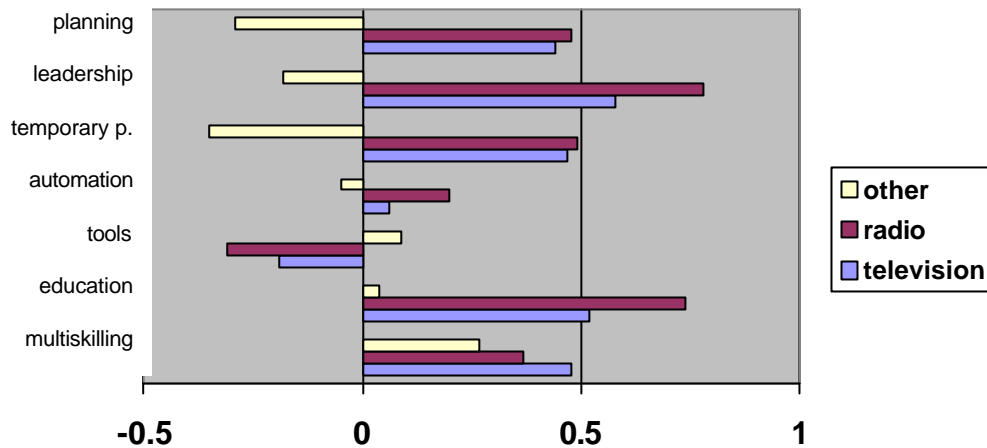


The graph gives the score of the different scales for each department. When the score of a scale is higher than '0' it means that there are stress-related problems with this item. When the score is below '0' this indicates that there are no problems.

As the graph clearly shows, there are two main areas of concern in the broadcasting company: problems with workload/stress and mental demands. For the television department, the mental demands are the most serious. For 'other' departments the problem of workload and stress are the ones which give rise to the greatest concern. The workers in the radio department fall somewhere between the other two groups.

The work situation for the other scales is not so dramatic. The only exceptions are control over working time at the television department and job satisfaction in the "other" departments. But the scores on these scales are less worrying than those indicated for those resulting from mental demands and workload/stress.

The following graph highlights the causes of stress in the broadcasting company:



The graph shows that the reasons for high levels of stress differ in several departments, although the radio and television departments are confronted with similar difficulties. For television and radio, there are problems with leadership, education, planning and multiskilling. For the "other" departments, the main issue is multiskilling and, to a lesser extent, tools and education.

The example provided by the broadcasting company shows how Quick Scan Stress (i) displays stress in different departments of a company and other problems related to the working situation, and (ii) helps to find the main causes of stress in different departments.

6 Evaluation

When evaluating Quick Scan Stress it is, from a certain point of view, a pioneering trade union instrument. It makes complicated problems much easier to tackle and knowledge available for workers. Thanks to Quick Scan Stress, the problem of stress has become approachable for non-technical specialists.

In addition, Quick Scan Stress is an instrument for trade union work. It gives trade unions and work councils a tool by means of which they can put stress on top of the company agenda. Since its release, Quick Scan Stress has been used in some 1,000 companies. To the union's surprise, this instrument has also been utilized by some employers who wanted access to such a research instrument. However, the main reason employers buy Quick Scan Stress is its price. It is much cheaper than hiring expensive researchers to carry out such a study.

On the other hand, not all problems can be resolved by Quick Scan Stress. There still remains some problems to be tackled:

- The instrument indicates the origins of stress in a company in a general way. It is not as precise as it should be for effective and well-targeted action. For example, Quick Scan Stress may recommend improving planning in the company. But this can be done in a number of ways.

Once the research by Quick Scan Stress is completed, it is necessary to fine tune the changes that have to take place within the company.

- Quick Scan Stress helps to put stress on the company agenda, but – as already mentioned– the implementation of counter-measures needs time and it is not an easy task. The pitfall of Quick Scan Stress is that there has been a fantastic amount of research carried out but nothing or little has been done with it.

Nevertheless, the Dutch trade union movement is very pleased that Quick Scan Stress is available for trade unions and works councils.

Working without End – my Time is my Life¹

By Siegfried Balduin, IG Metall, Germany

Stress is a subject that IG Metall has been concerned with for some years and it has become a major focal point in the union's policy. In Germany, as elsewhere, workers are increasingly having to cope with long working hours, excessive demands, heavy workloads and a lop-sided balance between home and work – all of which contribute to growing stress levels. Overtime, including unpaid overtime hours, has become the norm in a number of enterprises and many professionals are taking their work home and log in as teleworkers.

In 1999 IG Metall decided to launch an all-out initiative under the motto "Arbeiten ohne Ende – meine Zeit ist mein Leben" (Work without end – my time is my life) and open a debate on this issue in enterprises and throughout the union structure. This initiative met with a good response both on the shopfloor and amongst the general public. The theme appealed to everyone, especially white-collar workers, who are particularly affected by this new phenomenon. IG Metall received a great deal of feedback and positive reactions.

Indeed stress is an issue that people readily identify with, to the extent that it touches upon some of their key concerns. It deals with health and flexible working time and these are questions, which mobilise and motivate them today more than ever. In Germany, people are prepared to tackle this subject and work with it politically. It has become one of the main topics in union work and offers great opportunities for an intensive dialogue with the members and for improving the union's image. They think it is critical to deal with the changes concerning work and working time requirements.

During the first phase of the campaign, IG Metall focused its efforts on trying to offer a "toolbox" for attracting interest in the subject at the local level and in the media. A whole host of brochures and instruments were produced for publicity purposes in order to stimulate debate both within companies and outside. These were widely disseminated amongst the general public and discussed at length. Questionnaires were developed to gather and compile first-hand information, contacts and networks were established, with scientists and experts, who reported to works councils about the results that were obtained. Through the internet and intranet people were able to communicate with each other and exchange experiences. Personal communication has proved to be a critical aspect in this whole process.

This first phase has been successful to the extent that IG Metall has managed to create a basis, a platform within companies and the media, to bring the issue to the fore and raise the union's profile in this area. It is now discussed throughout the whole country. As a matter of fact, it has become an interesting product and a door opener.

¹ "Arbeiten ohne Ende – Meine Zeit ist mein Leben"

IG Metall will pursue this campaign, enhance cooperation with practitioners of occupational medicine and researchers, and expand existing networks. The world of work has changed dramatically, so have people's attitude to work and their needs. The aim is not to produce ready-made solutions, but to put the issue on the agenda of works councils, the unions at all levels and in everyday life at work, to gain insight and promote understanding on the impact and consequences of these developments.

Basically, the employers' reaction has been very cautious. But employers know this is a popular subject and, very rarely, do they act against it or hamper the discussion. The majority of white-collar workers have taken part in the surveys because it was about health and working hours, and they are concerned by the lengthening of working time. Although the 35-hour week is stipulated in collective agreements, in reality people realise that they are working much longer and suffer from increased pressure and a growing workload. It is important to offer them the opportunity to look at this subject, to provide the arena to do so, and facilitate awareness building exercises in union activities. It is also critical to raise the issue outside the company.

The question now is how to convince the workers that they really can change something. What strategy will enable them to bring about such a change? What are the alternatives?

Unions are faced with the task of bridging the widening gap between the new reality on the shopfloor and a model of rules negotiated in past decades. Instruments such as limits on working time or the regulation of overtime, which were used in production, do not function in the service-oriented workplace. There is a need to work out new bargaining and plant regulations, which can be applied to both the current forms of work and the expanding types of autonomous work, against the backdrop of new target-oriented management and working time concepts. New patterns must be developed, which take into account people's interests and expectations - their aspirations for more self-determination, leeway and time sovereignty, more compatibility between work and private life, performance and health protection, and the growing importance of continuous training and life-long learning.

Whilst seeking to develop an overall approach, IG Metall has therefore to take into account the diversity of interests. Trying to reach agreements that cover all its members - whether they are blue or white-collar workers - is a major challenge for the organisation. Not all groups have the same interests at the same point in time. As an industrial union, IG Metall has to find ways of maintaining solidarity whilst, at the same time, developing a differentiated approach to reflect individual needs and concerns.

Working time is an example of such a conflict area. There is a trend to abolish clocking in and out (*Zeiterfassung*) and employers certainly see this as progress, as they would not need to check any more. The majority of employees, however, see it as an attack against their vested interest. They are eager to defend clocking in and out and, in the political debate, this gives the union an opportunity to try to find a solution with them. For IG Metall it is clear that time clock is not a solution to the ever-growing work pressure and

workload. For these people, though, it is a kind of assistance, something that they do not want to give up. They are working longer and longer hours but do not want new flexible working time arrangements in as much as they are not rewarded for that extra time. IG Metall has very good experience with the principle of rewarding overtime work and time compensation for white-collar workers, which is very different from what is practised in production areas.

The union has therefore to come up with new models, which strike the balance between the interest of employers and non-manual workers and the different phases of their work and perhaps of their lifetime as well. There is a need for differentiation. Young people have different needs to older people, women than men, but the union has to go onto the offensive and be willing to examine different options. IG Metall wants more sovereignty, more control over time, with the possibility for non-manual workers to determine when they can exercise their rights, rather than leaving that up to the employer.

IG Metall feels that this issue has to be included in future collective agreements. A new strategy needs to be worked out which links the shaping of working time with innovative forms of work organisation and performance requirements. Stress and working time cannot be dissociated from each other. They have to be seen in conjunction and be linked to the payment system, to qualifications and to performance objectives.

A debate is currently going on in Germany on the need to have co-decision rights for performance rates. If the union does not manage to develop an instrument that will ensure it has some influence on what has to be achieved and within what time period, there will be a spiral effect caused by the different performance requirements with the risk for the union of becoming increasingly marginalised.

In the second phase, IG Metall will concentrate on actions with those companies that have taken part to-date. Many of them are seeking to establish specific common positions in order to make them implementable in the works councils and collective agreements.

IG Metall is very eager to promote such activities and will strongly support international initiatives. The exchange of information and experience as well as networking will be in the interest of all concerned and should be given a high priority.

Arbeiten ohne Ende?

Working without End?

Ziele ohne Maß
Noch mehr Druck
Warum komme ich nicht mehr raus?

Goals without measure?
More pressure?
Why cant I cope any more?

MyTimeismyLife
Meine Zeit ist mein Leben

Eine Arbeitszeit-Initiative der IG Me

Workload is growing

- ◆ Overtime including unpaid overtime hours plays an important role
- ◆ Many professionals take their work home and log in as teleworkers.
- ◆ At the same time: an enormous increase in the volume of work.

Reasons for the new deregulation in daily work

- ◆ Work without mandatory time-clock („Vertrauensarbeitszeit“ = working-time based on mutual trust)
- ◆ New methods of management of indirect control
- ◆ Direct confrontation with the market and the desires of customers
- ◆ New autonomy at work („Work as you like it but make profits“)

Methods of indirect control

- ◆ Splitting former single enterprises into profit centers, business units and so on
- ◆ Everyone is competing against everyone else
- ◆ Entrepreneurial functions become a part of the employees' work
- ◆ Permanent benchmarking
- ◆ Excessive profit expectations of shareholders = excessive internal company demands = excessive demands on the employees at work

Ambivalence about effects on employees

- ◆ No more patronising and control
- ◆ Many employees like working without limits
- ◆ Fear to survive on the market
- ◆ Deteriorating effects on health and living conditions

Deteriorating effects on health

- ◆ Permanent overtime and exhaustion including burnout
- ◆ Psychosomatic illnesses caused by the fear of failure and a permanent bad conscience
- ◆ Burst eardrums and tinnitus syndrome from overexertion and overwork
- ◆ Using the same hard tactics as management in dealings between employees (peer pressure and mobbing)

Some results of taking action

- ◆ Action against attempts to extend working time (motto „my time is my life“)
- ◆ Going public in the company (publishing individual and anonymous cases of working without limits in the intranet)
- ◆ Creating conditions which allow to exchange experiences with indirect control
- ◆ Information and consultation with works councils and trade unions

National campaign of IG Metall

- ◆ Motto "Working without limits? My time is my life"
- ◆ First stage:: addressing white-collar workers especially in the IT sector; at present: expanding to all sectors
- ◆ Health and safety activities to keep work within limits



Arbeiten ohne Ende?

Working without End?

My Time is my Life

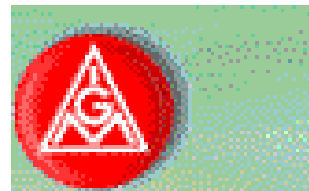
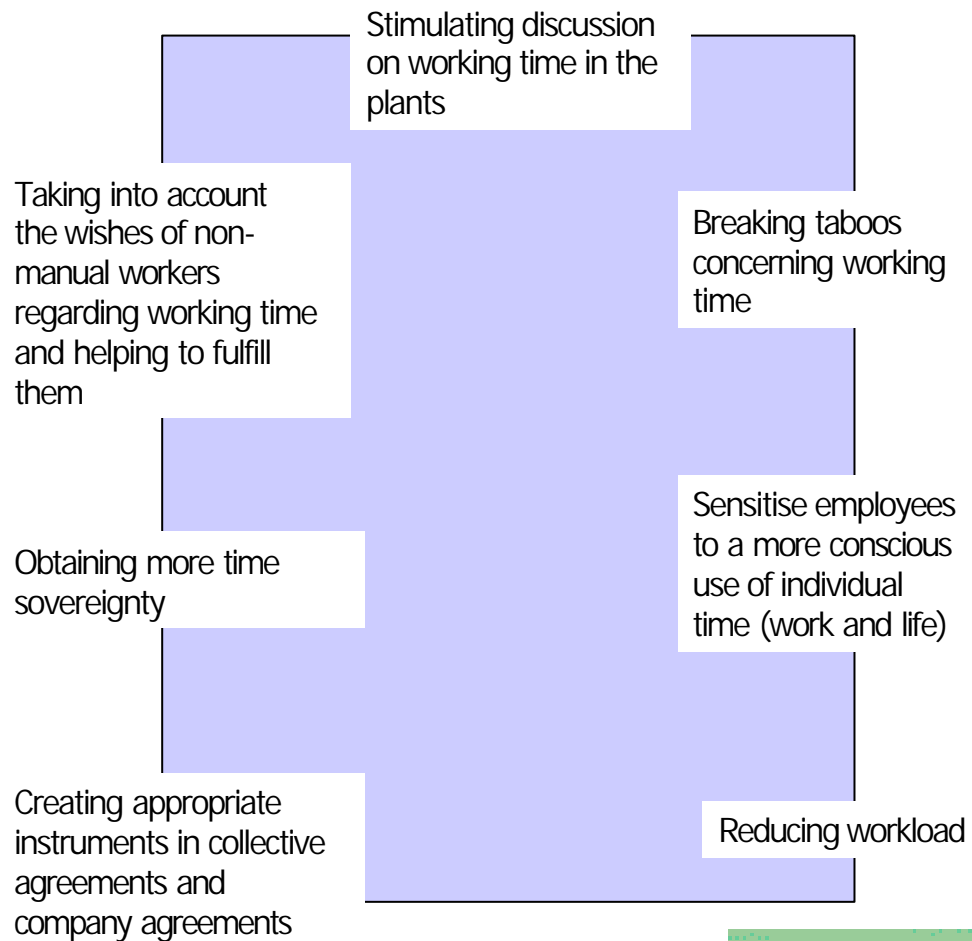
Meine Zeit ist mein Leben



Eine Arbeitszeit-Initiative der IG Metall

IG Metall's Working Time Initiative...

With its working time initiative, IG Metall aims at



Outline of Denki Rengo's “Heartful” Center Activities

By Hidehiko Ishimoto, JEIU¹, IMF-Japan Council

Denki Rengo is an industrial union organizing 780,000 workers in the electric machinery, electronics and information industries of Japan. Most of the unions in major Japanese electric machinery companies - of which there are about 220 - are affiliated to Denki Rengo.

Japanese workers' unions are not organized by craft or trade but, basically by company, incorporating under a single union, both manual and non-manual workers employed in the same company.

A quick look at the membership composition shows that men make up 81 % while women account for 19%. In terms of educational qualifications, those with one or more university degree account for 32%, which includes 6% who have earned a master's degree. University graduates accounted for 16% of the membership in 1983. The high ratio of engineers and technical experts in the Denki Rengo's membership is to be expected in a leading advanced technology industry.

This is well reflected in the composition of workers in the electrical machinery industry itself. In fact, this industry boasts a high ratio of engineers, even in the manufacturing sector as a whole and this trend is expected to increase in the future, although not quite as much as in the past. Under the fierce global competition, production has continued to shift from Japan to overseas since the eighties. The consequent hollowing out of domestic production as well as the reduction of the scale of production must be considered as part of the ongoing challenge.

1. Background

Ongoing intensification of inter-corporate competition and technological innovation expose workers in the electric machinery industry to greater responsibility and mental stress in their every day work environment, as companies increasingly adopt personnel and benefit policies that focus on individual ability and performance. Relatively long hours of work put in by engineers and others involved in product development are certainly a major factor contributing to stress. Challenging economic situations are driving corporations to restructure, contributing to uncertainties for the future and especially concerning employment and working conditions.

Moreover, mental care had not received much attention in the past in a country where a national drive for greater material wealth had been at the expense of enjoying spiritual reward, particularly during the high growth era of the sixties and seventies. Japan is also no exception to the shared challenges faced by modern societies, namely the dilution of meaningful human relations in a typical nuclear family living in ever more crowded cities.

¹ Japanese Electrical, Electronic and Information Union.

Attitudes of union members

According to the survey conducted by Denki Rengo, 88.3% of the respondents said they felt stressed and mentally exhausted. The survey found most of the causes were job and workplace related. Workers spend most of their 16 to 17 non-sleeping hours at the workplace away from home. Mental health problems are expected to rise due to growing demand for more skills and better performance. This makes mental hygiene at the workplace a matter of extreme importance for a working person.

Mental health care has only just begun among a limited number of social partners and health insurance unions are far from being sufficient. According to a Rengo (national center) survey, mental health care services are provided at 46% of business offices. The contents of such services are diverse: health consultation accounted for 67%; sports and recreation for 39%; education through company newsletter and pamphlets for 31%; interviews at regular health screening events, for 27% and organizing seminars for 26%.

A major challenge at present is the general absence of understanding regarding mental illness. The majority of enterprises and unions simply do not understand the situation well enough to even attempt to deal with it. Unlike other common illnesses, mental illness is not accompanied by common symptoms such as headaches and toothaches and, therefore, it is difficult for other people to understand. A person suffering from mental troubles may be misunderstood for being simply lazy and going slow on the job because he/she does not show visible signs of pain or affliction. It is imperative, therefore, for members of his/her family, superiors and peers at work to have the necessary understanding about mental illness. It may well be that those around the suffering person are unintended causes of the very illness.

2. Contents and results

Against this backdrop, Denki Rengo adopted a resolution at its 1998 Convention to establish a Heartful Center as a concrete action policy towards providing mental health care. The objectives are twofold. It will not only be limited to treatment and care after the occurrence, but it will provide support for the union members and their families, so that they can continue to fully enjoy working as well as family and community life. The Center was established in January 1999 and, since then, it has been very active.

To be more specific, the center provides consultation to members and their families over the telephone (toll-free dial) on matters of mental health. Three qualified and experienced counselors provide such services. In addition, there is a physician in attendance in case of need for medication. Although no detailed data is kept, each consultation service may last from 40 minutes to an hour. At present, there are no interviews conducted and the service is limited to telephone consultations. However, in future, there may well be a demand for on-line services by e-mail.

Consultation service is available by phone from Monday to Friday from 4pm till 8pm.

In 2000, there were approximately 2000 cases (or 160 per month) of which 380, i.e. 20% were handled by the physician. Members in need of consultation make 75% of the telephone calls, while their families make 25%. Sometimes higher-ranking people and union officials make the call.

Details discussed vary, from difficult relations involving superiors or peers at work or work itself, to marriage and childbirth. Statistically, they can be broken down to complaints concerning mental slump accounting for 36.0%; family related matters, 32.3% and workplace related issues 24.9%. Services are provided by the center on a strictly confidential and anonymous basis. The system therefore does not allow Denki Rengo any access to information that involves privacy of the consulting member.

Networks of experts linking 700 places nationwide provide consulting members access to interview with expert physicians as needed.

Furthermore, some corporations provide a mental health service but since their service and those provided by Denki Rengo have different characteristics, one cannot really say which is better.

From the worker's point of view, the more consultation offices there are, the greater the advantages because they will have a wider choice.

An external consultation agency is better in terms of privacy protection.

Consultation services offered by an employer have disadvantages in terms of privacy. Given the emotional human relations that still exist in workplaces in Japan, one may say that any mental health related initiative presented to management is unlikely to succeed without involving the human resources department.

3. Other activities

There are other mental health activities. Apart from consultation services over the telephone, there is a general need to establish consultation offices at workplaces. To this end, it is necessary to gain acceptance of mental health services by making members understand that mental ill health is nothing uncommon. Members must also be encouraged to be responsible in maintaining their own mental health.

Denki Rengo dispatches lecturers (physicians) to mental health seminars organized by the affiliates. To date, seminars have been organized in more than 100 workplaces with 5,000 members present throughout the country.

Denki Rengo will be compiling guidelines shortly to promote the establishment of mental health consultation services at each affiliate.

4. Denki Rengo's safety net

In addition to the Heartful Center, Denki Rengo organises other activities aimed at supporting members.

Family support: Life insurance and retirement pension schemes and providing access to lawyers (at each local association);

Employment and human resources development: temporary staff services business (in planning stage) and employment services (projected);

Volunteer activities: Planting trees in South East Asian countries and Nursing and Care services (in planning stage).

Nissan Motors Co., Ltd., which is an affiliate of Japan Automobile Workers' Union (JAW), has been carrying out similar activities for over ten years.

Process of Establishment

(1) Decision on basic concepts (June 1998)

(2) Introduction and adoption of resolution at the 46th Annual Union Convention in July, 1998.

(3) Establishment of the Steering Committee for "Heartful" Center

(4) Meetings of the Steering Committee once a month since September 1998

(5) Up to now:

*** Setting up of a nationwide network of specialists**

*** Hiring and training staff for the "Heartful" Center**

(telephone counselor, resident doctor, office staff)

*** Requested cooperation of the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Japan Medical Association**

*** Setting up of a nationwide public network**

Members of the Steering Committee of the JEIU “Heartful” Center

1. Endo, Toshiko	NTT Kanto Health Management Office	Supervising Head Nurse
2. Kubota, Hiroya	Mental Health Research Institute	Representative
3. Shima, Satoru	Tokyo Keizai University	Professor
4. Tanaka, Katsutoshi	Toshiba Head Office Health Center	Industrial physician
5. Nakagawa, Shigeaki	Matsushita Electric Health Insurance Union	Director of Tokyo Health Supervision Center Doctor of Psychiatry
6. Haratani, Takashi	National Industrial Institute of Medical Research	
7. Morisaki, Minako	Sony Atsugi Health Development Center	Assistant Section Chief
8. Ofuku, Mayumi	JEIU	Chief Secretary
9. Nakagawa, Yoshio	JEIU	Director of Labour Policy
10. Uchida, Katsuhisa	JEIU	Manager of Labour Welfare Department
Special Advisors: Oda, Shin Katsura Kuboki, Tomifusa	International University of Health and Welfare LCC Stress Research Institute University of Tokyo, Prof.	Professor of Psychiatry department of psychosomatic medicine department of psychosomatic medicine

Union Members and Family Members

Structure of the “Heartful” Center

INTRODUCTION TO SPECIALISTS & SPECIAL ORGANIZATIONS

In accordance with the situation as described in telephone consultations or requested by the person in need of consultation, in regions where available, we will introduce you to appropriate counseling and medical examination specialist or specialist organizations for treatment.

CONSULTATIONS

Nationwide toll-free calling for telephone consultations - the protection of privacy of the caller is given top priority.

JEIU “Heartful” Center

Help from four counselors and one psychiatrist

(1) Who is eligible for consultations?

Members of unions affiliated with JEIU and their families.

(2) Telephone

Consultation with highly experienced professional counselors via toll-free calling from any point nationwide, **No telephone charge, No consultation fee.**

Emotional Health Advisory Center business hours: Monday through Friday, except national holidays

Reception is open 16:00-20:00 and consultation time is until 21:00 hrs.

(3) Introduction to specialists at specialist organizations

In accordance with conditions described in telephone consultations and the request, in regions where available, consultations with counselors, specialists such as counselor, public health nurse, doctor of psychiatry, doctor of psychosomatic medicine, etc. and introduction to specialist organizations, all at no charge.

(4) Nationwide network of specialists

The “Heartful” Center supports union members and their families through the establishment of the exclusive JEIU nationwide network for the most appropriate consultation, counseling, examination, and treatment.

Privacy is strictly observed regarding name of the union, name of the individual, nature of consultation, etc.

Strict observation of confidentiality

Stress and Burnout - The ISTC's Response

By Eddie Lynch, ISTC, Great Britain

I would like to address the issue of stress from a UK perspective and give a flavour of the steps that are being taken in the UK to confront the stress epidemic.

Before going on to say something about the trade union responses in the UK, it is appropriate to mention what the UK government is doing and also what employers are not doing.

Much of the work on stress in the UK has stemmed from the European dimension.

The European Commission in 1996 produced a report that recommended that further action on work related stress in the European Union should involve a greater degree of consistency.

The report argued that we should target:

- The degree of attention accorded to work related stress in the different countries
- The legal framework which exists to encourage action
- The general strategies adopted to manage it

In the UK we have taken this on board; health in the workplace has never been so high on the official agenda.

The Department of Health has made occupational health a key theme in its

"Our Healthier Nation Campaign"

The Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, which is headed by deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, and the Health & Safety Commission have jointly published

"Revitalising Health & Safety"

which sets ambitious targets to reduce workplace ill health in the next decade.

And the Health & Safety Executive has set out its own ten year plan to deliver better occupational health to the UK workforce in

"Securing Health Together.

This agenda in the UK reflects a recognition that this is an area long overdue for concerted attention.

Some alarming statistics demonstrate the scale of the problem:

- Every year in the UK twenty five thousand people leave the labour market because of work related stress.
- Every week, three thousand people move from long term sick leave to incapacity benefit with ninety percent never returning to work.
- In the UK the cost of work related ill health is estimated at around £10 billion per year (14.16 billion USD).

Not surprisingly, the Health & Safety Commission, which is the body in the UK charged with the enforcement of Health & Safety standards and legislation, came to the conclusion that work related stress could no longer be ignored.

These findings are significant.

Why? Because they are official recognition that stress is not just an individual's problem.

And it is the way in which the workplace and the jobs within it are organised and designed that is largely to blame for the levels of stress related illness among individuals. However, it would be unfair to let employers off so lightly.

Employers' responses are simply inadequate.

They do, however, have one thing in common and that is their emphasis on the individual's responsibility for controlling stress related illness.

There is only one word to describe this approach – disgraceful.

Studies prove that the main factors causing stress were:

- deadlines
- constant interruptions
- lack of support
- poor communication
- incompetent senior managers

Another problem with many employer responses in the UK is that they appear to knee jerk reactions performed without any effort to assess the psychosocial risks at work within an organisation.

A report last year by Industrial Relations Services looked at one hundred and twenty six organisations.

What is striking is that the vast majority of those organisations surveyed said stress in their organisation had caused the sickness absence rate to rise, yet only forty four percent of respondents measured absence in a way that would allow them to identify stress as the cause of absence.

These employers are being found guilty. Guilty of negligence.

Recent record damages in stress cases have begun to focus employers' attention on the fact that they have a statutory duty to safeguard, as far as is reasonably practicable, the psychological health of their employees.

And let us not forget – the victim – the person that has the added stress which is involved in taking the case to the courts.

Given that the link between organisational factors and employee mental health is now clearly established, companies who are making organisational changes for pure profit objectives, without consideration of how these will affect the employees' quality of life, must be taken to task.

Not only because of negligence, but because this approach can only lead to counter productive levels of ill health and absenteeism.

In the UK the Trades Union Congress published a report in January 1999 entitled "Work Stress: A Suitable Case for a Code."

The report was based on responses to a survey from nine hundred and twenty seven trade union safety representatives.

They had been selected at random from over seven thousand safety representatives who had responded to an earlier TUC survey, which has established that stress at work was by far the major Health & Safety issue for them and the people they represented.

The main factors identified in the TUC survey as leading to occupational stress were;

- too much work 62%
- continuous change in work organisation 50%
- speed of work 48%
- tight or unrealistic deadlines 47%
- being cut off from decision making 45%

The ISTC has also conducted its own survey.

This survey was designed to find out more about stress, its causes and the concerns of trade union members.

The results were that fifty four percent of the ISTC's safety representatives identified stress as one of their top five Health & Safety concerns.

In addition to this fifty five percent of the branch secretaries identified stress as a top priority.

Earlier this year ISTC commissioned a report on "Work Organisation and Occupational Health & Safety in the UK Steel Industry."

The report concludes in summary by saying...

"there is strong evidence that psychosocial aspect of work, including long hours, heavy workload, lack of control over work, lack of social support at work and lack of opportunities to develop skills, impact on the physical and mental health of workers."

It should be noted however that union involvement improves action against stress – with employers taking steps far more frequently where they had consulted the union on their stress policy than where they had not.

The latest TUC survey of nine thousand representatives published last year reinforces the previous evidence collated from past surveys.

This evidence is being used in the UK to force the issue on legislation regarding work related stress.

At the present time in the UK, there is no specific legislation on dealing with stress.

The evidence therefore would seem to be from trade union perspective, conclusive.

At the moment, ISTC is working with the Corus Group to develop an occupational health training programme, which addresses the problems of bullying, harassment and stress.

Last year the ISTC worked with the UK Wire and Wire Rope Industry to develop a Company Initiative Programme to promote Health & Safety in the industry.

A major segment of this programme addressed the issue of occupational health: subsequently the programme was incorporated into the HSE's three year strategic plan for health and safety in the UK.

However, employers have a duty under both statutory and common law that are relevant to tackling stress at work.

This applies to risks of stress just as it does to other workplace hazards.

These arguments were used successfully in the 1996 legal case of John Walker against Northumberland County Council, which resulted in a compensation payment of £175,000 (248,125 USD).

Walker was a social worker that had two nervous breakdowns as a result of increasing workload.

At the moment in the UK there are encouraging signs that stress will be put on a statutory footing.

The HSE is now looking to strengthen its guidance by producing an Approved Code of Practice on using risk assessments to prevent occupational stress.

This is a step that has the full support of the TUC and Trade Unions in the UK.

To summarise therefore the situation in the UK:

The issue of work related stress has certainly come to the fore over the past three or four years.

The Government has recognised the problem, the trade unions are also pushing for legislation.

The ISTC is working with Government, trade unions and employers to prevent workplace stress, whether this has been in the form of guidance to our members, training programmes such as the ISTC's Health and Safety Education programme or general lobbying to influence legal framework in the UK.

The quicker we get stress on a statutory footing, the healthier our members will be.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the global market logic continues to prevail in current economic thinking, workers worldwide are confronting, as never before, an array of new organisational structures and processes – downsizing, contingent employment, overwork, unrealistic deadlines, higher productivity requirements, etc. When the workload becomes too large for the number of people and the time available, when people have little say or no control over their work, when the fear of unemployment looms large in the workers' minds, the result is stress and depression with adverse effects on social and family life.

According to the Third European Survey on Working Conditions carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, work is the main cause of stress for one-third of employees. In Japan, the proportion of workers suffering from serious anxieties or stress in their working life increased from 53% in 1982 to 63% in 1997. The findings from recognized national and international research bodies are significant and show that work-related stress can no longer be ignored.

As discussions during the Seminar have shown, the way in which work is now being organised is undoubtedly one of the main causes of stress. In this regard, the new management approaches play a critical role. What matters today is to be successful and achieve the predetermined goals. The concept of working time is vanishing and the employee's attitude is increasingly dictated by the need to attain these objectives. In Japan, seniority is replaced by performance requirements. There is a new kind of "autonomy" in enterprises linked to more individual responsibility, where most of the pressure no longer comes from management but from co-workers in the team or unit. "Do whatever you like, but make sure that you are profitable" is the watchword. The threat of disinvestment and job cuts is a Sword of Damocles hanging over workers' heads. In this new work environment, the peer pressure is such that the principle of solidarity is being put under increasing strain.

Stress needs to be controlled at source. Stress management techniques and complementary medicine may have some positive benefits in the short term and help relieve the strains caused by stress, but they cannot remove the source of stress itself. To be successful, any strategy should not focus on the individual in isolation, but look at the relationship between the worker, his/her job context and working conditions, and incorporate changes upstream at the workplace as well.

Preventive approaches to stress and burnout are becoming more and more relevant in terms of research and policy orientation. Prevention should definitely prevail over cure. Unfortunately, so far, little research has been done on the benefits of stress prevention. Although the cost of stress is high for workers, companies and society at large, employers very often point to personal problems of employees and argue that stress is subjective and primarily a matter of individual differences and private circumstances.

Faced with these developments, some IMF affiliates have sought to develop innovative approaches. In the Netherlands, for example, the Quick Scan Stress has enabled unions to identify the causes of stress and put this issue on the company agenda. In Germany, IG Metall has launched an initiative under the motto "Work without end – my life is my time" which has helped it to bring the issue to the notice of both companies and the media. In Sweden, SIF has produced a CD-Rom which describes the balance that must be struck between work and leisure. In Canada, the Autoworkers Union is carrying out a study in cooperation with medical staff and university researchers on the relationship between work organisation and blood pressure levels of autoworkers. In Japan, Denki Rengo established a support centre in 1999 which provides for consultation on matters of mental health.

Several participants underlined the fact that the issue of stress should be included in collective agreements. Evidence has shown that there is a clear linkage between stress and working time and these two issues could not be dissociated from each other. They had to be examined in relation to the payment system, to qualifications and to performance objectives. Through negotiation, trade unions should seek to ensure that occupational stress is appropriately tackled and part of the bargaining process.

It was also argued that stress should be the subject of minimum international norms. Most countries have standards for health and safety provisions at the workplace, but these standards tend to focus on the physical aspects and do not clearly include the psychological or mental health aspects of working conditions. Action should be taken within the ILO to set legally binding standards in this field and devise effective implementation mechanisms.

In the UK the issue of work-related stress has come to the fore over the past few years and there are encouraging signs that stress will be put on a statutory footing. It would seem that the Government has recognised the problem and the trade unions are also pushing for legislation. At the moment, the ISTC is working with the Corus Group to develop an occupational health and safety training which addresses, among other things, the problems of stress.

As noted by SIF and IG Metall, raising awareness among the membership is an important element in advocating any stress prevention measures. Unions must promote understanding of the stress syndrome and the need for early intervention. They should include awareness building exercises in their activities to enable their members to demand that employers take the necessary measures. The challenge for all is then to turn this awareness into action.

Generally, unions should seek to demonstrate the positive impact of stress prevention and intervention on the psychosocial work environment as well as the need for a balance between work and private life. This would play an important role in any IMF strategy to assist its affiliates in dealing with occupational stress among white-collar workers in the metal industry.