

Home > Journal > Social Sciences & Humanities > PSYCH

[Indexing](#) [View Papers](#) [Aims & Scope](#) [Editorial Board](#) [Guideline](#) [Article Processing Charges](#)

PSYCH > Vol.3 No.4, April 2012

OPEN ACCESS

## Social Causes to Sickness Absence among Men and Women with Mental Illnesses

PDF (Size: 82KB) PP. 315-321 DOI: 10.4236/psych.2012.34045

### Author(s)

Kari Batt-Rawden, Gunnar Tellnes

### ABSTRACT

The mental ill-health diagnoses seem to be increasing in Europe and there are global trends towards increasing stress and ill-health at work. In order to understand the social situation for the sickness absentees it is important to consider how identities and relationships are formed in interaction with other people. Aims: 1) To reveal the absentees own perceptions and experiences of being on sick leave; 2) To understand and uncover the absentees' own views of the causes of their illnesses. Methods: This study takes an exploratory approach, examining an area where there has been little data and building upon work that has focused on sickness absence as a phenomenon. It attempted to do so through a pragmatic synthesis of elements of ethnography and grounded theory. The main study concentrates on two main groups of diagnoses: musculoskeletal and mental problems. A sample of 30 persons on sickness absence was selected from the county of Oppland, Norway. 14 were diagnosed with musculoskeletal problems and 16 with mental illnesses. This paper deals with one main group; mental illnesses. Seven men and nine women from the county of Oppland, Norway were diagnosed with mental illnesses in accordance with the ICD-10 medical classification system (n = 16). Results: Women experience family burdens and caring responsibilities as social factors to their sickness absence, often due to a lack of support and constant burden from both work and home. Men experience stress and conflicts at work, mostly from the leadership and its organizational structure. Conclusion: A holistic approach that considers the whole life situation must also be considered in order to understand gender differences in sickness absence. Furthermore, to investigate what can be done to reduce long-term sickness absence that is not caused by traditional somatic or severe psychological disorders.

### KEYWORDS

Mental Illness; Health; Social Causes; Sickness Absence; Coping, Burden; Stress;

### Cite this paper

Batt-Rawden, K. & Tellnes, G. (2012). Social Causes to Sickness Absence among Men and Women with Mental Illnesses. *Psychology*, 3, 315-321. doi: 10.4236/psych.2012.34045.

### References

- [1] Almberg, B., Grafström, M., Krichbaum, K., & Winblad, B. (2000). The interplay of institution and family caregiving: Relations between patient hassles, nursing home hassles and caregiver's burnout. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, 15, 931-939. doi:10.1002/1099-1166(200010)15:10<931::AID-GPS219>3.0.CO;2-L
- [2] Batt-Rawden, K. B. (2010). The role of music in a salutogenic approach to health. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 12, 11-18.
- [3] Batt-Rawden, K. B., & Tellnes, G. (2005). Nature-culture-health activities as a method of rehabilitation: An evaluation of participants' health, quality of life and function. *International Journal of Rehabilitation Research*, 28, 175-180. doi:10.1097/00004356-200506000-00013
- [4] Batt-Rawden, K. B., & Tellnes, G. (2010). The benefits of a holistic and salutogenic approach to rehabilitation and recreation. *Ecology and forests for public health* (pp. 103-111). Innsbruck: International Council for Scientific Development 2010.

- [Open Special Issues](#)
- [Published Special Issues](#)
- [Special Issues Guideline](#)

[PSYCH Subscription](#)

[Most popular papers in PSYCH](#)

[About PSYCH News](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Recommend to Peers](#)

[Recommend to Library](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Downloads:	247,364
Visits:	543,610

[Sponsors >>](#)

- [5] Batt-Rawden, K. B., & Tellnes, G. (2011). The benefits of nature and culture activities on health, environment and wellbeing: A presentation of three evaluation studies among persons with chronic illnesses and sickness absence in Norway. In: H. Nordby, R. Rønning, & G. Tellnes (Eds.), *Social aspects of illness, disease and sickness absence* (pp. 199-222). Oslo: Oslo Academic Press.
- [6] Batt-Rawden, K. B., & Solheim, L. (2011). Helpers of the fragile, elderly and sick: Report from a nursing home. In: H. Nordby, & R. Rønning, & G. Tellnes, (Eds.), *Social aspects of illness, disease and sickness absence* (pp. 223-242). Oslo: Oslo Academic Press.
- [7] Billeter-Koponen, S., & Fredén, L. (2005). Long-term stress, burnout and patient-nurse relations: Qualitative interviews study about nurses' s experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 19, 20-27. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6712.2005.00318.x
- [8] Brown, G. W., Tillis, O. H., & Cathy, H. (1995). Loss, humiliation and entrapment among women developing depression: A patient and non-patient comparison. *Psychological Medicine*, 25, 7-21. doi: 10.1017/S003329170002804X
- [9] Bryngelson, A. (2009). Long-term sickness absence and social exclusion. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 37, 839-845. doi:10.1177/1403494809346871
- [10] Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory. In: J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology. A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- [11] Corrigan, P. W., & Lundin, R. (2001). *Don't call me nuts: Coping with the stigma of mental illness*. Tinley Park, IL: Recovery Press.
- [12] Dollard, M. (2007). National surveillance of psychosocial risk factors in the workplace: An international overview. *Work & Stress*, 21, 1- 29. doi:10.1080/02678370701254082
- [13] Elovainio, M, Kivimäki, M., Linna, A., Brockner, J., Kvan den, B., Greenberg, J., Pentti, J., Virtanen, M., & Vahtera, J. (2010). *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 64, 470-472. doi: 10.1136/jech.2008.084301
- [14] Engström, L.-G., & Eriksson, U.-B. (2011). The impact of psycho-social work environment on sickness absence: Results from the Swedish Life & Health 2008 Study. In: H. Nordby, R. Rønning, & G. Tellnes (Eds.), *Social aspects of illness, disease and sickness absence* (pp. 175-184). Oslo: Oslo Academic Press.
- [15] Eriksson, U.-B. (2010). After all you're only human-long-term sickness absence from emotional, relational and structural perspectives. PhD Thesis. Karlstad: Karlstad University Studies.
- [16] Eriksson, U.-B., Starrin, B., & Janson, S. (2008). Long-term sickness absence due to burnout: Absentees' experiences. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18, 620-632. doi:10.1177/1049732308316024
- [17] Eriksson, U.-B., Engström, L.-G., Starrin, B., & Janson, S. (2009). Insecure social bonds at work, mental ill health and sickness absence. *Work*, 38, 1-9.
- [18] Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [19] Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.
- [20] Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2000). *Ethnography: Principles and practice*. London: Routledge.
- [21] Hallsten, L. (2005). Burnout and wornout: Concepts and data from a national survey. In A. S. G. Antoniou, & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Research companion to organizational health psychology*. Cheltenham: Elgar.
- [22] Järvisalo, J. et al. (2005). Mental disorders as a major challenge in prevention of work disability. Experiences in Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Helsinki: Kela, The Social Insurance Institution.
- [23] Johansen, V., & Rønning, R. (2011). Social factors and long-term sickness absence: The need for a broader approach. In: H. Nordby, R. Rønning, & G. Tellnes (Eds.), *Social aspects of illness, disease and sickness absence* (pp. 175-184). Oslo: Oslo Academic Press.
- [24] Karasek, R., & Theorell, T. (1990). *Healthy work, stress, productivity and the reconstruction of working life*. New York: Basic Books.
- [25] Kalimo, R. (2000). The challenge of changing work and stress for human resources. The case of

- [26] Kornhauser, A. (1965). *Mental health of the industrial worker: A Detroit study*. New York: Wiley.
- [27] Krantz, G., & ?stergren, P.-O. (2001). Double exposure. The combined impact of domestic responsibilities and job strain on common symptoms in employed Swedish women. *European Journal of Public Health*, 11, 413-419. doi: 10.1093/eurpub/11.4.413
- [28] Lazarus, R. S. (1999). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis*. London: Free Association Press.
- [29] Lidwall, U. (2010). *Long-term sickness absence: Aspects of society, work and family*. Stockholm: Karolinska Institutet.
- [30] Lindberg, P., Josephson, M., Alfredsson, L., & Ving?rd, E. (2006). Promoting excellent work ability and preventing poor work ability: The same determinants? Results from the Swedish HAKul study. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 63, 113-120. doi: 10.1136/oem.2005.022129
- [31] Michie, S., & Williams, S. (2003). Reducing work related psychological ill health and sickness absence: A systematic literature review. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 60, 3-9. doi: 10.1136/oem.60.1.3
- [32] Nordby, H., R?nning, R., & Tellnes, G. (Eds.) (2012). *Social aspects of illness, disease and sickness absence*. Oslo: Oslo Academic Press.
- [33] Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2003). *Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage Publications.
- [34] Rantakeisu, U., Starrin, B., & Hagquist, C. (1999). Financial hardship and shame—A tentative model to understand the social and health effects of unemployment. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 29, 877-901. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/29.6.877
- [35] Semmer, N. K. et al. (2007). Occupational stress research: The Stressas-Offense-to-Self. In J. Houdmont, & S. McIntyre (Eds.), *Occupational health psychology: European perspectives on research, education and practice* (Vol. 2, pp. 43-60). Avioso S. Pedro: ISMAI
- [36] Scheff, T. J. (1966). *Being mentally ill III: A sociological theory*. Chicago: Aldine
- [37] Schensul, S., Schensul, J., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Wicke essential ethnographic methods*. London: Altamira Press.
- [38] Siegrist, J. (1996). Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1, 27-41. doi: 10.1037/1076-8998.1.1.27
- [39] Siegrist, J. (2002). Effort-reward imbalance at work and health. In: P. Perrewe, & D. Ganster (Eds.), *Research in occupatioanl stress and well-being, hisorical and current perspectives on stress and health* (pp. 261-291). London: JAI Elsevier. doi:10.1016/S1479-3555(02)02007-3
- [40] Siegrist, J. (2005). Social inequalities in health in Europe—From scien- tific explanations to prevention. In: G. Tellnes (Eds), *Urbanization and health. New challenges to health promotion and prevention*. Oslo: Academic Press.
- [41] Smith, J. (2003). *Qualitative psychology. A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage Publications.