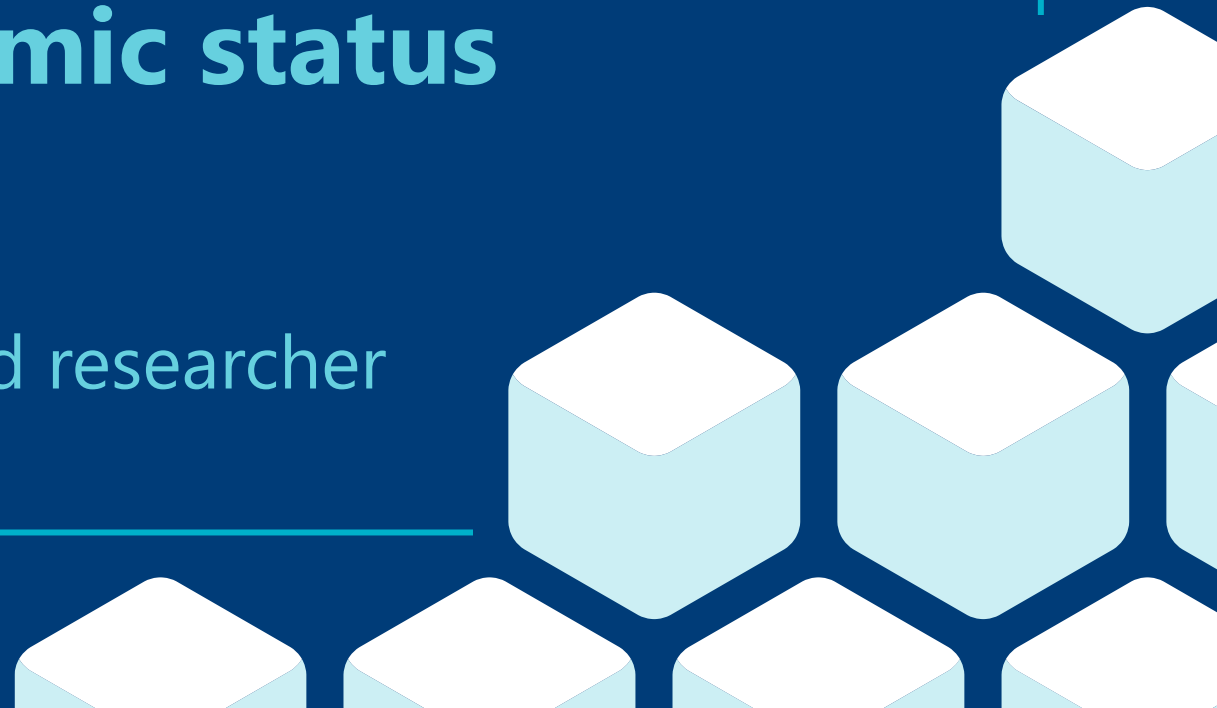


**Teachers' wellbeing during the  
reform of the Finnish national core  
curriculum for basic education – the  
role of school neighborhood  
socioeconomic status**

Maarit Kauppi, PhD, Specialized researcher  
maarit.kauppi@ttl.fi



## Background

- A new Finnish national core curriculum for basic education became effective in August 2016.
- Concerns have been raised about how the new aims can be achieved considering limited resources and potentially increased educational needs.
- Particularly in schools located in socially disadvantaged areas, the conflict between the new aims and available resources may have affected teachers' wellbeing.



## Aims of the study

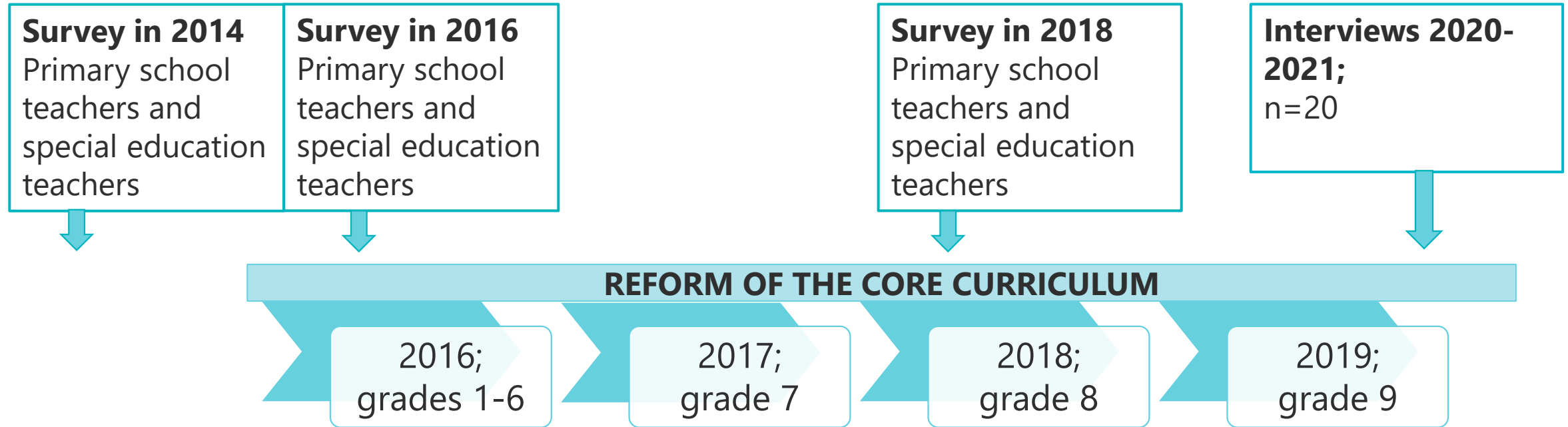
- To examine potential changes in primary school teachers' wellbeing after the reform of the core curriculum
- To investigate whether these changes differed according to school neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES)



## Methods - data

- Data were drawn from the Finnish Public Sector Study (FPS), an ongoing prospective cohort study of public sector employees in Finland.
- In this study we used data of primary school teachers from three consecutive study waves, **one before (2014)** and **two after the implementation of the curriculum (2016, 2018)**
  - Primary school teachers who were working and answered to the surveys in 2014 (n=2768), 2016 (n=2059) or 2018 (n=1940).

# Opetyhy – Teachers' wellbeing in a changing school environment



**FPS survey data;** includes varied information about work, working environment, work community, leadership and health of employees → here **job strain and self-rated health**

**Interviews;** incl. teachers' experiences about the reform, factors potentially affecting the wellbeing at work, good practices to promote wellbeing at work

## Methods – variables

- **Job strain**; job demand and job control → high demand and low control = high job strain.
- **Self-rated health**; a single-item measure (very good, good, average, poor, very poor) → indicator of suboptimal self-rated health (average, poor and very poor).
- **School neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES)** was determined using a grid database including small-area level information on household income, educational attainment and unemployment rate (Statistics Finland)
  - In this study 750 x 750 m area around the school
  - categorized into quartiles; higher quartile => higher school neighborhood SES

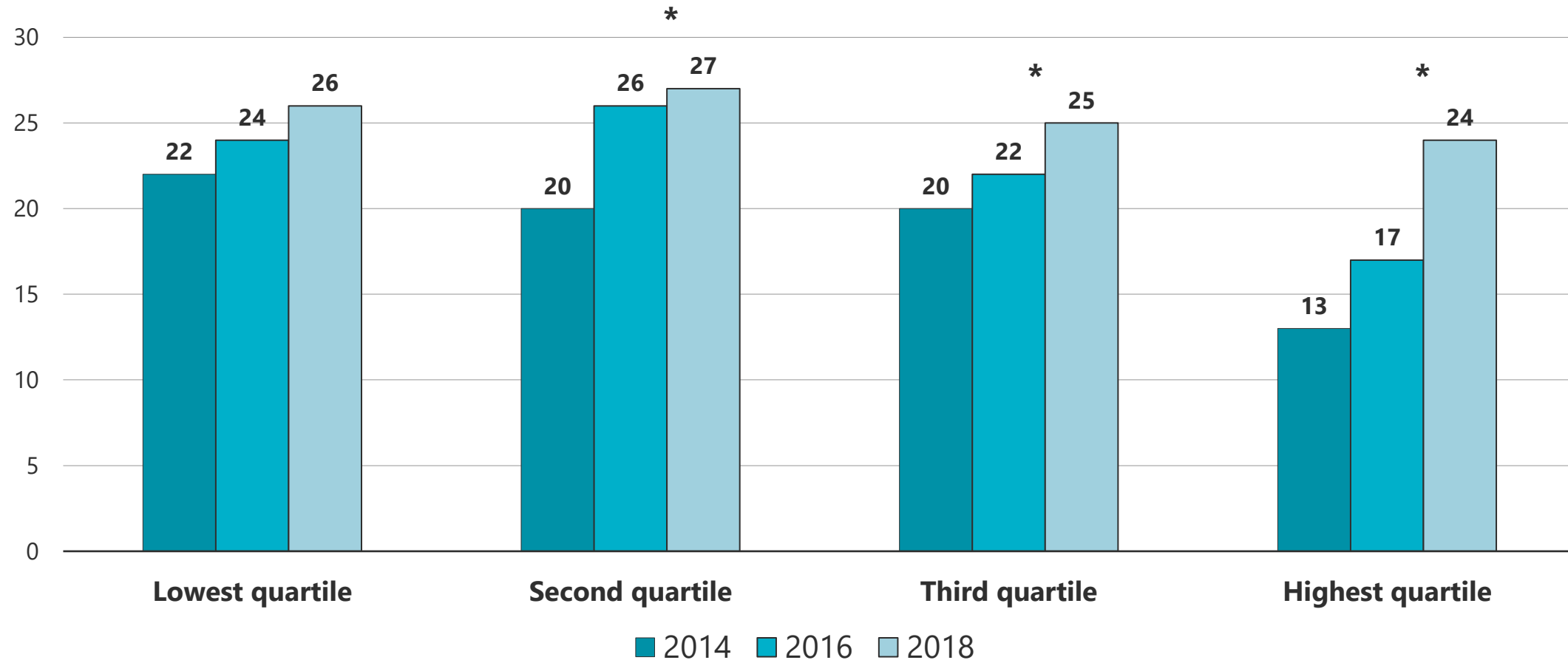
## Methods – statistical analyses

- Log-binomial regression analysis with the generalized estimating equations (GEE) method was used to assess the changes in job strain and suboptimal self-rated health in 2016-2018 compared to 2014.
- Relative Risks (RR) with 95% CI (confidence intervals) for changes were estimated

# Main results

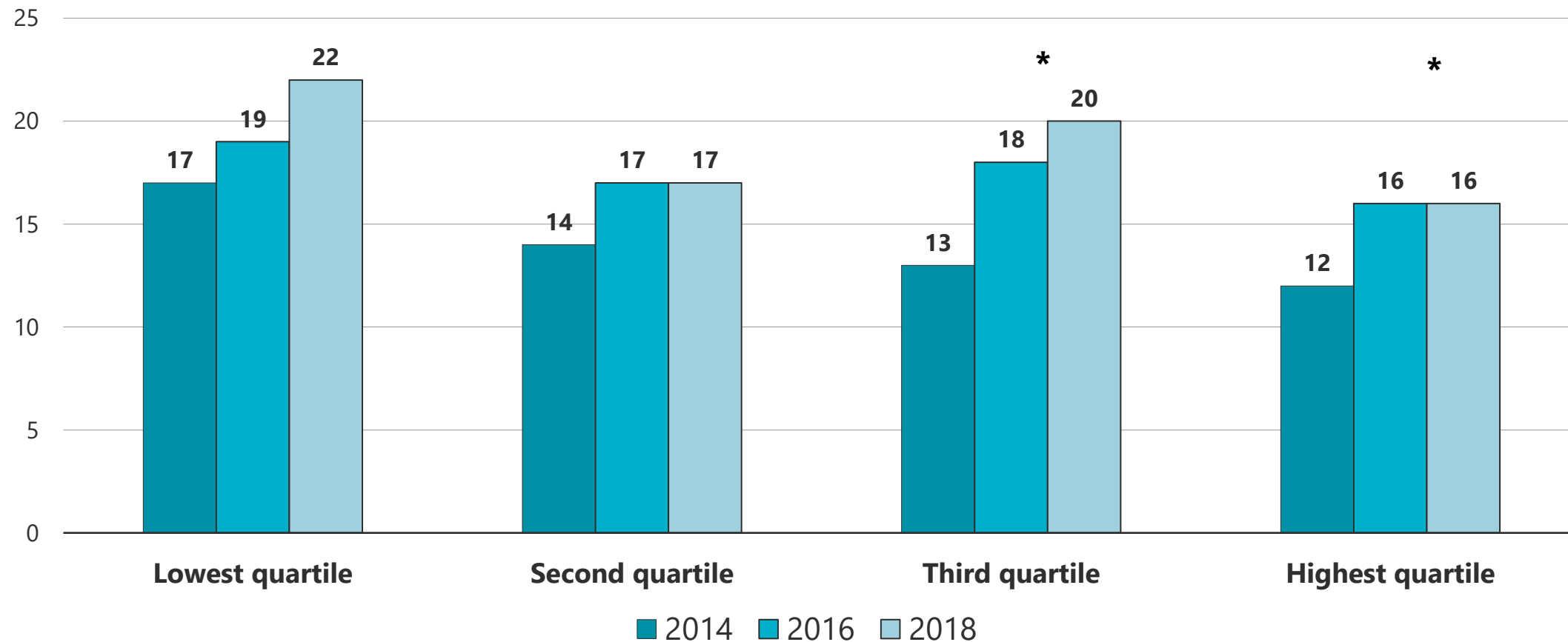


## Percentage of teachers reporting job strain in 2014, 2016 and 2018 according to the school area socioeconomic status (SES, quartiles)



\* Significant difference in 2016-2018 vs. 2014

# Percentage of teachers reporting suboptimal self-rated health in 2014, 2016 and 2018 according to the school area socioeconomic status (SES, quartiles)



\* Significant difference in 2016-2018 vs. 2014

## Trends in job strain and suboptimal self-rated health according to school neighborhood socioeconomic status

School neighborhood SES, quartiles	Job strain		Suboptimal self-rated health
	RR (95% CI)		RR (95% CI)
All	<b>1.28 (1.18, 1.40)</b>		<b>1.35 (1.23, 1.47)</b>
Lowest quartile	1.10 (0.93, 1.29)		1.17 (0.99, 1.39)
Second quartile	<b>1.28 (1.09, 1.51)</b>		1.11 (0.91, 1.34)
Third quartile	<b>1.18 (1.00, 1.39)</b>		<b>1.40 (1.19, 1.65)</b>
Highest quartile	<b>1.56 (1.30, 1.87)</b>		<b>1.21 (1.00, 1.47)</b>
group x time, p value	<b>0.06</b>		<b>0.63</b>

Models adjusted for age, sex and study wave

RRs calculated for study waves in 2016-2018 using study wave in 2014 as a reference.

# Conclusions

- An increase in job strain and suboptimal self-rated health was noticed among primary school teachers after the implementation of the new national core curriculum (2016-2018) vs. before that (2014).
- Lower level of wellbeing was noticed among teachers working in schools located in more disadvantaged area, but no effect modification of the reform according to school area socioeconomic status was observed.



# Thank you!

## Members of the study group:

Jenni Ervasti, PhD

Ville Aalto, MSc

Suvi Vesa, MSc

Nina Olin, MSc

Anna-Leena Kurki, MSc



Työsuojelurahasto  
Arbetarskyddsfonden  
The Finnish Work Environment Fund



ttl.fi



@tyoterveys  
@fioh



tyoterveyslaitos



tyoterveys



Tyoterveyslaitos