

# Young Employees' Trajectories and Occupational Class Differences in Utilization of Occupational Health Care Services

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## Background

- Finland has a unique occupational health service (OHS) system with statutory prevention of occupational health hazards (preventive services) and additionally purchased primary care services.
- OHS may be provided by employer's own OHS units, private clinics or public health centers with specifically educated occupational health physicians, nurses, physiotherapists and psychologists.
- OHSs are free for employees at the point of delivery.
- The utilization of OHS in Finland or elsewhere has been only scarcely studied, and previous longitudinal studies are lacking.

## Aims

- 1) To identify developmental trajectories in OHS primary care service utilization in the municipal employees of the City of Helsinki between the ages of 20 and 34 years from 2004 to 2017.
- 2) To identify occupational class differences in belonging to different trajectories.

## Methods

- Retrospective register-based cohort study, part of the Helsinki Health Study on health and well-being among employees of the City of Helsinki, Finland.
- Covered all Helsinki City employees aged 20-34 with employment record for four years between 04/06/2004 and 04/19/2017 (n = 10,064).
- Similar developmental trajectory on OHS utilization were studied with Group-based trajectory modeling (GBTM)
- The role of occupational class as a predictor of the trajectory group membership was studied with multinomial logistic regression.

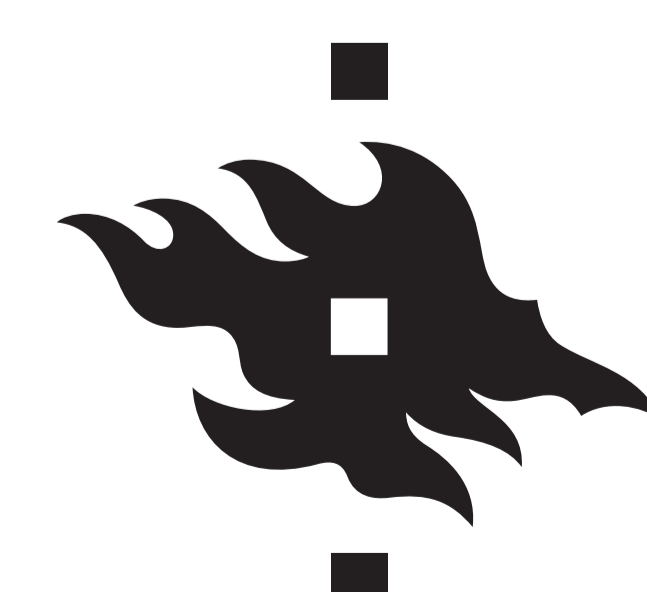
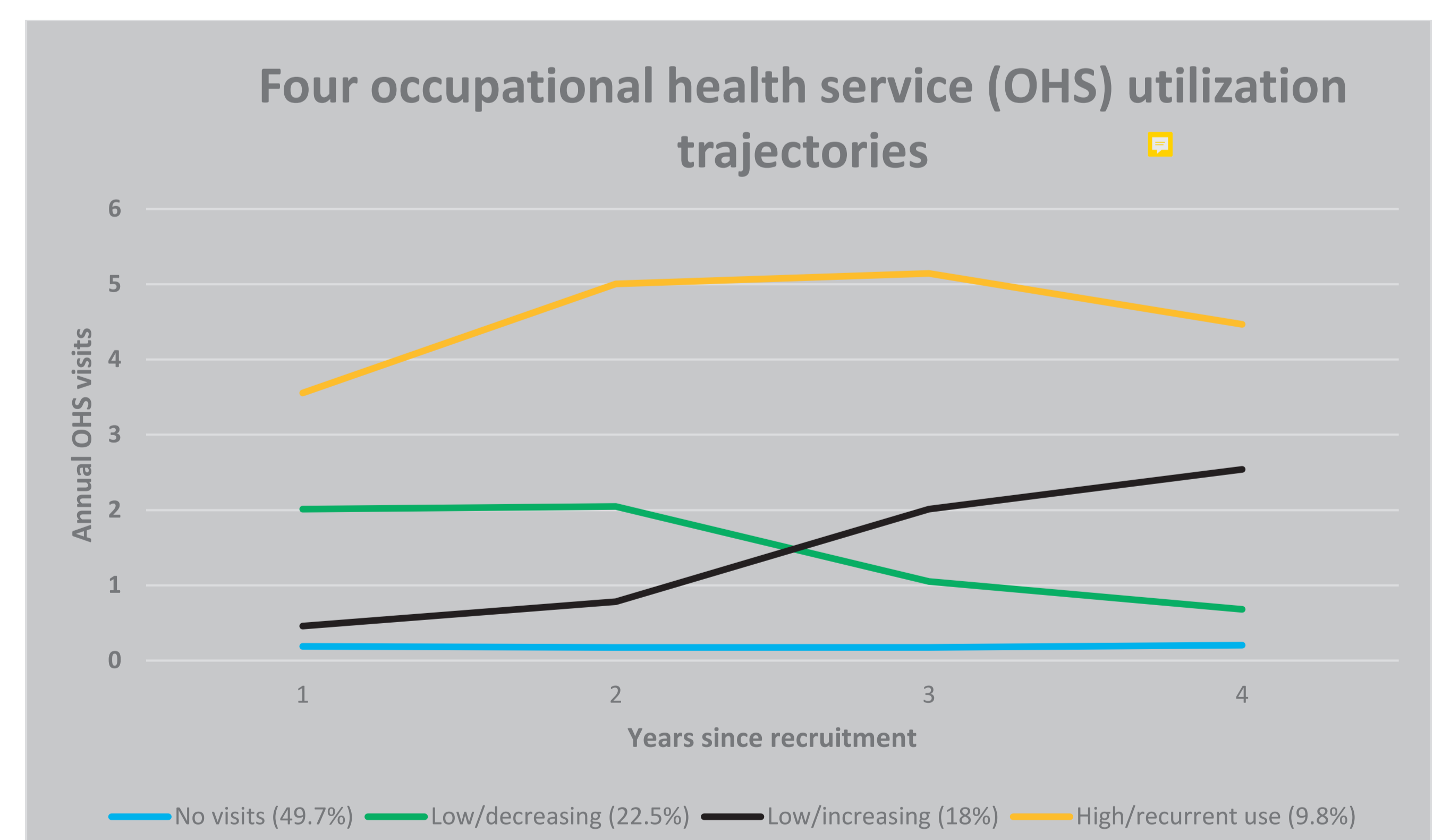
## Results

- 27% of the employees were men and 73% women.
- 23% were managers or professionals, 19% semi-professionals, 42% routine non-manual workers, and 16% manual workers.
- Four occupational health service utilization groups were identified:
  - o "No visits" (50%)
  - o "Low/increasing" (18%),
  - o "Low/decreasing" (22%) and
  - o "High/recurrent" (10%) use.

- Occupational class differences were found. Lower occupational classes had a higher propensity for "High/recurrent" OHS utilization:
  - o Of managers or professionals, 59% belonged to the "No visits" trajectory and 5% to the "High/recurrent" trajectory,
  - o of semi-professionals were 48% and 10%,
  - o of routine non-manual workers 48% and 11%
  - o of manual workers 49% and 13%, respectively.

## Conclusions

- A large proportion of the young employees do not use OHS primary care services and non-use is most common among the highest occupational class.
- Preventive measures should be considered among the trajectory groups of "Low/increasing" and "High/recurrent".
- In addition, attention should be paid to the two lowest occupational classes, and their OHS utilization should be closely monitored by the occupational health care in order to identify those in need for extra support.
- OHS utilization requires more longitudinal research.



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