

# Effect of Work-to-Family Conflict on Long-term Sickness Absence and Divorce Risk: Prospective Study among Finnish Employees

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# Study: Effect of Work-Family Conflict on Long-term Sickness Absence and Divorce Risk: Prospective Study among Finnish Employees.

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Doctoral thesis

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# Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences

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1. Is work-to-family conflict associated with subsequent long-term (more than ten days) sickness absence of employed men and women?

Limited to those employees who live with a partner with or without children (definition used: employees with family; single persons without family and single parents excluded)

The results were adjusted for various background, work-related and health-related factors that are generally known to influence sickness absences.

# Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences

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Background factors: age, level of education (tertiary education, secondary, primary) and number of children

Work-related factors: work sector (private/public), weekly working time and unsocial working time (yes/no)

Health-related factors: Longstanding illness (yes/no)

# Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences

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The research data consist of Finnish *Quality of Work Life Surveys* (FQWLS) conducted by Statistics Finland and was merged with register-based follow-up data.

# Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences

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In the first research task the FQWLS surveys conducted in 1997, 2003 and 2008 are used with the register-based follow-up data covering three years after each survey point (three-year follow-up).

# Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences

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Long-term sickness absence information was drawn from the registers of the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (KELA)

The analyses were conducted separately for men and women.

# Work-to-family conflict and divorce risk

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2. Is work-to-family conflict associated with later divorce risk of employed men and women?

In addition, as in the first research question, background factors, work-related factors and health-related factor are controlled for in the analysis.



# Work-to-family conflict and divorce risk

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FQWLS 1990, 1997 and 2003 are used with the register-based follow-up covering the years 1991–2012.

Divorce information was drawn from the Finnish population registry.

## Some definitions

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The research data used in the study consist of *employees*, therefore work means here *wage work* (entrepreneurs not included).

*work-to-home conflict* under examination (as explanatory variable)

# Some definitions

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In the data, work-to-home conflict was measured by the questions: I feel I neglect my home matters because of my work. The response categories were: it is completely true, it is fairly true, not exactly true, it is not at all true (category not suitable is excluded from the new fixed variable).

# Statistical analyses

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The effects of work-family conflict on long-term sickness absence were analyzed using the negative binomial model adjusted for background, work-related and health-related factors.

The relative risk of divorce was examined by Cox proportional hazards analyses adjusted for same background, work-related and health-related factors than in the first research task.

## Work-family conflict, subsequent sickness absence and divorce risk: Previous studies

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There are only limited number of previous follow-up studies concerning connection between work-family conflict and long term sickness absence and a lack of follow-up studies concerning effect of work-family conflict on divorce risk.

Unique Data

Work-family conflict,  
subsequent sickness absence and divorce risk:  
Previous studies

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The studies have shown that work-family conflict:

Have a negative effect on relationship of spouses

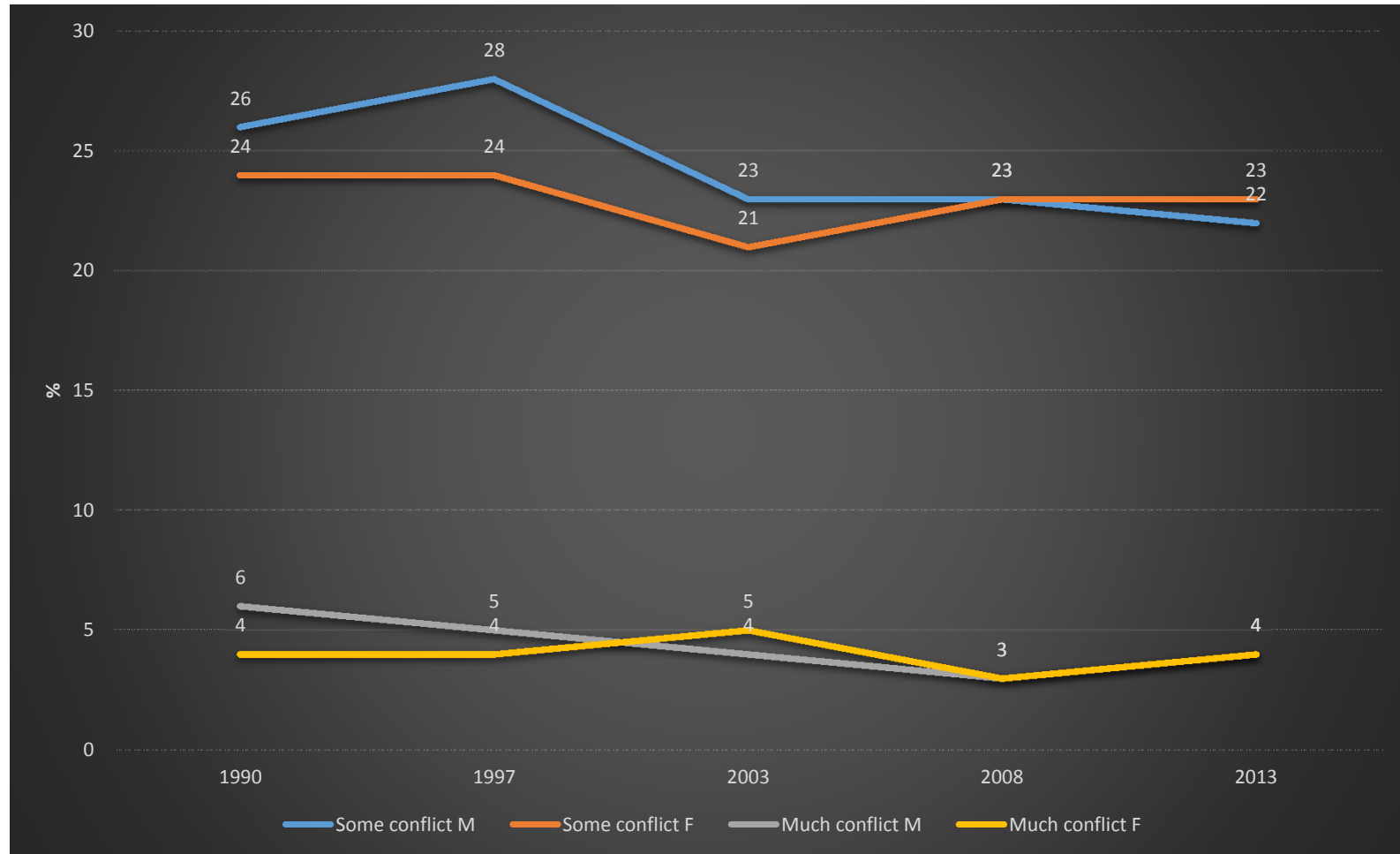
Expose individual to various physical, mental and social problems and diseases and to decline of welfare and life satisfaction.

Increases a risk of sickness absences.

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# Some preliminary results

# Work-family conflict of Finnish men and women in 1990, 1997, 2003, 2008 and 2013, employees with families, %





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# **Work-to-family conflict and long-term sickness absences**

Mean values of long-term sickness absence days according to work-family conflict and gender in three-year follow-up. Employees with families, %.

	Female	Male
	Mean (SD) F-test (p-value)	Mean (SD) F-test (p-value)
<b>Work-family -conflict</b>	0.637 (0.591)	3.865 (0.009)
Not at all	16.45 (45,69)	15.30 (47.51)
Only little	14.07 (40,17)	11.79 (40.06)
Somewhat	15.95 (46.87)	13.47 (41.55)
Much	16.95 (41.27)	26.46 (75.83)

Source: Finnish Quality of Work Life Surveys 1997, 2003, 2008

# Results

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Work-family conflict increased long-term sickness absence of employed men and women (those employees with the family).

After controlling background, work-related and health-related factors those employed men, who reported some work-family conflicts had 1.7 times higher rates ( $p=0.019$ ) of long-term sickness absences than those who hadn't any conflicts. Those men who reported to have much conflicts had 2.4 ( $p=0.050$ ) times higher rates of long-term sickness absences than those without conflicts.

# Results

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After controlling background, work-related and health-related factors, those employed women who reported some work-family conflicts had 1.6 times higher rates ( $p=0.005$ ) of long-term sickness absences than those who hadn't any conflicts. Those employed women who reported to have much conflicts had 1.5 times higher rates of long-term sickness absences than those without conflicts, but the results were not statistically significant ( $p=0.201$ )

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# **Work-to-family conflict and divorce risk**

The proportion of those men and women who divorced during the follow-up (1991-2012), according to work-family –conflict and gender (employees with the family)

	%	N
<b>Female (p=0.229)</b>		
<b>Work-family -conflict</b>		
Not at all (N=1270)	11,4	145
Only little (N=788)	13,2	104
Somewhat (N=666)	14,1	94
Much (N=127)	15,7	20
<b>Male (p=0.000)</b>		
<b>Work-family –conflict</b>		
Not at all (N=1051)	11,5	121
Only little (N=834)	16,7	139
Somewhat (N=713)	15,3	109
Much (N=131)	26,7	35

Source: Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey 1990, 1997, 2003.

# Results

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Work-family conflict increased divorce risk of employed men but not employed women.

After controlling background, work-related and health related factors (in the fully adjusted model), those employed men, who had much conflicts had 2.0 ( $p=0.000$ ) - fold higher risk of divorce than those who hadn't any conflicts (95% CI 1.36-2.97).

# Conclusions

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Work-family conflict may cause negative effects on employees health which in turn may lead to sickness absences. This is true for both men and women.

Work-family conflict may cause negative effects on employees marital relationships which in turn may increase the risk of divorces. This is true only for men.

---> Whose reaction? Man's whose job causes work-family conflicts or the partner's who does not accept the situation and ends up in divorce.



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**Thank you!**