

## **Collaboration in the successful work disability management (WDM)**

### **Oral presentation**

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## **Objectives**

The aim was to study how the WDM processes are related to the financial inputs to safety, health and work ability and the work disability costs.

## **Methods**

The study was conducted in ten large Finnish organizations. We collected data of the key business figures, the personnel, the financial inputs to safety, health and work ability, the WDM processes, and the disability costs in the years 2008-2013. The data sources were annual reports, accounting and HR figures, the questionnaires, and the focus group interviews of the management, HR, supervisors, safety representatives and shop stewards. The data was analyzed both with a quantitative and qualitative methods.

## **Results**

The WDM was in the strategic focus in all participating organizations. The disability costs due to sickness leave, work injury and disability pensions remained at the same level or decreased towards the end of the follow-up. The decrease correlated positively with the well-organized WDM practice. The organizational changes had often unfavorable effects on WDM processes. Set responsibilities, rules and practices, as well as good communication at all levels of the organization were characteristic to a well-functioning WDM. Occupational health service was a trusted partner in WDM. Although the organizations were well aware of the disability costs, they were not following all financial inputs systematically. Predictive safety, health and work ability indicators were not utilized fully.

## **Conclusions**

Organizations should be more aware of the financial and immaterial inputs to predictive safety, health and work ability. Better long-term indicators, follow-up practices and electronic systems are needed to let the top management, as well as the supervisors and workers to do rational actions based on relevant, up-to-date information. The collaboration with other organizations, such as occupational health service and insurance companies, involved in WDM is important and need to be developed further.