Domestic work - Domestic equality and sickness absence

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Background

- Sickness absence in women – domestic work part of the explanation?
- Division of domestic work by gender
- Few studies on the specific impact of domestic work on sickness absence
- Measures that capture the complexity of domestic work and domestic equality are requested
Background

Work to family interference

Paid work

Unpaid work

Family to work interference

Source: Staland Nyman 2008
Domestic work

- Children
- Work hours
- Work hours + stress
- Work tasks
  - Practical
  - Caring
- Division of work tasks
  - ‘Fairness’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside</th>
<th>Outside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Non Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low scheduled</td>
<td>High scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Building a framework

A practical side
- All these work-tasks......
- To organize daily life/work-family life
- ‘Constant preparedness’

An emotional side
- Relationships, caring
- ‘Constant preparedness’

Division - Negotiation
- Domestic equality
- Strategies for division of domestic work
  - Partner, children
Domestic workload

- Specific Domestic workload
- General Domestic workload
- Situational Domestic workload

Source: Staland Nyman 2008
Domestic workload

**Specific**
- Caring activities
  - Children special needs
  - Adults special needs

**General**
- Domestic work
  - ‘job strain’
- Parental responsibility
  - Children (number/age)
- Domestic responsibility
- Domestic work equity and satisfaction in partner relationship

**Situational**
- ‘Domestic life events or difficulties’
  - Financial problems
  - Divorce/separation
  - Serious illness/disease
  - Death of close person
  - Child exposed to violence/abuse

Source: Staland Nyman 2008
Domestic equality and sickness absence – Data from the Health Assets Project

Social Medicine, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, The Sahlgrenska Academy at Gothenburg University, Sweden

Social Medicine, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
Aim

To study associations between aspects of domestic equality and sickness absence in women and men
Design and Data

The Health Assets Project

- Questionnaire and registered based
- Women and men, 19-64 years of age
- Three cohorts; Population cohort, two sick-listed cohorts
- \( N = 15114 \) (\( N=7835 \))
- Sickness absence data; self-reported and register
- Data collection: Baseline 2008 – follow-up 2009
## Study population
The Health Assets Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Participants n (%)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General population cohort</strong></td>
<td>Women 2234 (57)</td>
<td>Men 1793 (44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sick-listed cohorts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer-reported cohort</td>
<td>Women 2196 (58)</td>
<td>Men 1114 (47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported cohort</td>
<td>Women 325 (54)</td>
<td>Men 173 (44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>4755 (60)</td>
<td>3080 (40)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Study group - Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Women n (% within sex)</th>
<th>Men n (% within sex)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting with a man</td>
<td>1603 (99)</td>
<td>24 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/cohabiting with a woman</td>
<td>16 (1)</td>
<td>1223 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 30</td>
<td>257 (16)</td>
<td>131 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 40</td>
<td>393 (24)</td>
<td>273 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 – 50</td>
<td>398 (25)</td>
<td>341 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 – 64</td>
<td>571 (35)</td>
<td>502 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory school</td>
<td>274 (17)</td>
<td>249 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper secondary school</td>
<td>630 (39)</td>
<td>557 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University or college</td>
<td>703 (44)</td>
<td>438 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational class</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>554 (36)</td>
<td>445 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-manual</td>
<td>687 (44.)</td>
<td>362 (29.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level</td>
<td>307 (19)</td>
<td>397 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>12 (1)</td>
<td>5 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domestic equality

Equality in partner relationship
Division in planning domestic work
Division in performing domestic work
Satisfaction division planning/performing
Conflict between paid and unpaid work

‘Domestic equality’
Sickness absence

Self-reported sickness absence during last 12 months

- (0 days)
- 1-7 days
- 8-30 days
- > 30 days
Equality in partner relationship
General population cohort
Preliminary results

Equality in relationship

Women %  Men %

Equal

Unequal

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

%
Responsibility for domestic work
General population cohort
Preliminary results

Planning domestic work

Performing domestic work

Women %
Men %

Myself
Partner/other adult
Equal division
Myself
Partner/other adult
Equal division

0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Satisfaction division  Conflict paid-domestic work
General population cohort
Preliminary results

Satisfied with division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conflicts paid-domestic work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Domestic equality and sickness absence

General population cohort – Women

Preliminary results
Domestic equality and sickness absence
General population cohort – Women children <12

Preliminary results

![Bar chart showing the relationship between domestic equality and sickness absence for women with children <12 years old. The chart displays the odds ratio (OR) for different periods of sickness absence (1-7 days, 8-30 days, >30 days) and the role of performing care tasks (Myself, Partner, Equal = REF).](image)
Domestic equality and sickness absence
General population cohort – Men
Preliminary results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>1-7 days</th>
<th>8-30 days</th>
<th>&gt; 30 days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied No = REF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict No = REF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Domestic equality and sickness absence
General population cohort – Men children <12
Preliminary results
Summery

Preliminary results

- Men who are satisfied with the division of domestic work had a smaller chance on sick-leave days during last 12 months

- Women with a partner doing a major part of the domestic work had a higher chance on sick-leave days during last 12 months

- Reporting a conflict between paid and domestic work was associated with a higher chance on sick-leave days during last 12 months for both women and men
Conclusion

A multidimensional assessment contributed to identify aspects of domestic work and domestic equality that might affect sickness absence.

What important aspects of domestic work and domestic equality are ’invisible’ in sickness absence research?

How could measures on domestic work and domestic equality be more sensitive to socio-cultural constructions of gender?