How about work demands, recovery, and health? A neuroendocrine field study during and after work
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Chapter 7

Recommendations
Recommendations for further research and development of methods

1. Future neuroendocrine research should be performed in the natural work environment more often.

2. Future urinary neuroendocrine studies should focus mainly on adrenaline and cortisol.

3. For evaluation of the neuroendocrine reactivity and recovery during a workweek, future studies in the natural work environment should extend the measurement period to cover two consecutive working weeks.

4. Future neuroendocrine studies should pay more attention to the choice and assessment of baseline measurements.

5. Prospective studies are needed to evaluate the causal relation between neuroendocrine reactivity, recovery, and the development of health complaints among workers.

6. Intervention studies that evaluate the effects of work organisation changes on the work demands of workers should examine neuroendocrine parameters.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Government

1. Screening for health problems related to workload and work stress should include (need for) recovery as parameter.

2. Policies on the work-leisure relationship should be informed by studies of (neuroendocrine) reactivity and recovery measures.

3. Policies on the work-leisure relationship, such as extended workdays, should be different for jobs with different types of work demands.

4. More attention should be paid to the concept of recovery in the development and evaluation of guidelines on work demands.
Companies

1. In planning work organisational changes like task enrichment, it is recommended to beware of aggravating demands instead of relieving demands.

2. In companies where employees work long hours prolonged rest time is needed. For the coach branch, it is recommended that rest-time during and after long-distance shuttle bus trips be extended from 8 hrs to 11 hrs.

3. The work-leisure relationship and rotation of shifts in workers with combined mental/physical demands need to be revised. In the ambulance branch, individual workers' needs for recovery during working hours should be accommodated, by allowing extra breaks during the shifts.
Recommendations for further research and countervailing methods

1. Future research in the field of work organization and recovery should focus on understanding the mechanisms and processes involved in work overload and stress. Studies should explore the role of recovery strategies in reducing the negative impact of work demands.

2. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the effects of work organization changes on recovery processes and health outcomes.

3. Intervention studies that evaluate the effects of work organization changes on the work demands of workers should examine the impact on recovery parameters.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Government

1. Strategies for health promotion should include measures to improve work-life balance and reduce demands.

2. Policymakers should be aware of the need for recovery in the workplace and consider the implementation of recovery strategies in workplace design.

3. Policies on the work-leisure relationship should be strengthened to ensure that workers have adequate time for recovery.

4. More emphasis should be given to the concept of recovery in the development and evaluation of guidelines on work demands.