How companies work with the psychosocial work environment

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According to leading researchers such as by Leka & Cox, Psychosocial risk management is recommended as the way to proactively and systematically ensure that work factors in the organizational and social work environment lead to wellbeing and engagement instead of strain, stress and ultimately exhaustion. Companies in Sweden scored the highest among companies in Europe on the psychosocial risk management index in 2012. In spite of this, work related illnesses attributed to organizational and social factors in the workplace have increased by 91% since 2011. Theoretically, if Sweden is very good at psychosocial risk management then the occupational illness levels related to the organizational and social work environment should be decreasing and not steadily on the rise. This paper presents findings from a study of how large companies in Sweden work with the psychosocial work environment one year after the introduction of organizational and social work environment legislation in Sweden in March 2016. Method – Telephone interviews about the psychosocial work environment were carried out with five large companies acknowledged to be good employers in Sweden; Volvo Car AB, Swedish Public Service Television company, AB Volvo, Microsoft and SKF. Informants belonging to the HR department on a global or national level in Sweden completed the interview. The interviews were transcribed during the interview and the accuracy of the content approved by each company before being included in the data set. Preliminary Results – The analysis of the results are ongoing. Preliminary findings suggest that; companies express a willingness to work systematically with the psychosocial work environment in a way similar to the physical work environment; that the introduction of legislation instigated some actions, and that the employee satisfaction survey is used as a form of risk analysis tool. Further, companies differ in whether they focus on the individual or the work environment when working to alleviate the negative health effects of work related stress after it has been detected. The findings are discussed in relation to work factors, psychosocial risk management and finally proactive & reactive tools and methods used. Preliminary Conclusions – The study provides an insight into what companies are actually doing when they are working with the psychosocial work environment. The contribution to science is increasing knowledge about how companies may be following all or some of the risk management process and what actions and tools they are using to do it.

KEY WORDS
Psychosocial work environment, Organizational and Social factors, Risk management, Sweden.

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