Psychosocial Work Environment and Oral Health

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Background

Psychosocial work environment make a significant contribution to the development of social inequalities in health1. A growing body of literature shows that adverse psychosocial work environment is linked with a wide range of diseases and stress related disorders2. However, evidence linking work environment with oral health outcomes is limited. With increasing proportion of older adults in the workforce, it is important to explore the role of psychosocial determinants as potential contributors to oral health in older populations.

Aim

To investigate the cross-sectional relationship between psychosocial work environment and oral health in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)

Materials and Methods

Sample: 3,150 working participants from the third wave (2006-07) of ELSA

Exposures: Two psychosocial work environment measures:

• Work control
• Effort/reward imbalance

Outcomes: Three subjective oral health measures:

• The presence of natural teeth and/or dentures
• Self-rated oral health
• Oral Impacts on Daily Performances

Covariates: Age, gender, marital status, educational level, occupational class, income, smoking status and alcohol consumption

Results

Odds ratios from logistic regression models for the association between control at work* and oral health:

Higher odds of reporting poor oral health in workers with medium control at work compared to workers with high control at work.

Workers with both medium and low control at work have higher odds of reporting oral impacts on daily performances compared to others with high work control.

However, these associations were not statistically significant.

Conclusion

The findings suggested that older workers who had poor work control were more likely to report poor oral health and oral impacts on daily performances. This association seems to be independent from socioeconomic characteristics.

However, there was no significant association between psychosocial work environment variables and edentulousness. This might be because edentulousness is a crude measure that is determined by disease levels and patterns of dental care throughout the life course.

References: