Innovative Work Behavior and psychosocial factors at work in social and health care

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Social and health care services are facing major organizational changes and severe economic challenges in Finland. In organizational changes it’s a challenge, how to create innovative work methods and processes. Changing organizational structures does not automatically lead to more efficient service production. Frequently organizational change is a top down process where innovations in teams and real work are neglected. And in many cases implementation of new work methods fails as the employees and teams can’t participate the planning of implementation.

Innovativeness has been studied from several perspectives. West and his colleagues have studied team climate factors leading to innovativeness at group level (eg. support for innovation, shared tasks), de Jong and den Hartog innovative work behaviour and the psychosocial factors at work relating to it. Also Schaufeli and Hakanen in Finland have studied the effect of work engagement to innovativeness. In this study we combined these perspectives and studied the work-related factors, team climate and work engagement in relation to innovative work behaviour.

This paper is based on a data from personnel surveys (N=2312) in 6 social and health care organizations. The survey is a part of a larger Osuva-study where four action studies and this survey are combined in a multicenter study. The aim of the study is to search new methods to manage and lead the collaborative innovation process, which enable more participation of personnel, clients and service providers. The data were analysed using general linear models.

The analysis showed that team climate, job control, time pressure and work engagement as well as supervisors support on innovations all had significant and strong effects on innovative work behaviour. Support from the team for innovation and job control had the strongest effects. The study showed that innovative work behaviour is related to factors at team level, work level and work engagement.