

5.1 Resume in English

Sickness absence in two Danish workplaces: analysis of interviews using critical discursive psychology.

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Sickness absence is a substantial cost of the Danish economics. The estimated cost was about 37 billion Danish kroner in 2006. At first sickness absence is described in a literature examination, which shows that research can be presented in five categories: *factors associated with absenteeism, misuse of sickness absence, presenteeism, absenteeism as coping strategy and articles of research into sickness absence*. Then sickness absence is examined through a series of qualitative interviews. Research question for the thesis is: "How is the meanings of sickness absence constructed in discursive practice?". And the purpose of the thesis is improved understanding of sickness absence and to provide inspiration for future research.

The Empirical material consists of six interviews of women who work as nurses at Odense University Hospital (OUH) and advisers working at Middelfart Sparekasse. The method used is a critical discursive psychology and the position taken is social constructionism. The basis for this positions is that a phenomenon as sickness absence, is a human social act that most correctly is examined with such a scientific theoretical position because: "The Goings-on between people in the course of their everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed" (Burr 2003, 4).

The study shows, that there is evidence of four repertoires: *Coping, Justified Sickness Absence, Presenteeism and Misuse*. Participants are placed in some dilemmas as a result of these conflicting repertoires on sickness absence. Three dilemmas are described which arise in the clash between contradictory repertoires. *Justified Sickness Absence and Misuse, Justified Sickness Absence and Presenteeism* and between a *Coping* repertoire and a *Misuse* repertoire.

The presence of a very strong repertoire of *Misuse* creates a pressure on the individual, as some solves with *Presenteeism*. The literature shows, that this can be harmful to the individual.

The Coping repertoire serves the interest of both the company and the employees, and this conclusion leads to a hypothesis that coping both as repertoire and action can help people to manage their working lives. The research has not contributed to solving the dilemmas which the employees are faced with, and although Kristensen's article about absenteeism as coping (Kristensen 1991) may be regarded as a core text in the field, very few research projects have been multidisciplinary.

It is recommended, that interventions in relation to sickness absence should be considered how these contribute to the four repertoires.

A surprising point is that the repertoires are general and across respectively OUH and Middelfart Sparekasse, which has led to the hypothesis that repertoires are societal and will be traceable to other workplaces and among other groups of employees.