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DO TRADITIONAL MALE ROLE NORMS MODIFY THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN HIGH EMOTIONAL DEMANDS IN WORK, AND SICKNESS ABSENCE?

Merete Labriola,¹ Claus Hansen,² Thomas Lund¹ ¹*Regional Hospital, Herning, Denmark;* ²*University of Aalborg, Aalborg, Denmark*

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Objectives Ambulance workers are exposed to high levels of emotional demands, which could affect sickness absence. Being a male dominated occupation, it is hypothesised that ambulance workers adhere to more traditional male role norms than men in other occupations. The aim is to investigate if adherence to traditional male role norms modifies the effect of emotional demands on sickness absence/presenteeism.

Methods Data derive from MARS (Men, accidents, risk and safety), a two-wave panel study of ambulance workers and fire fighters in Denmark (n = 2585). Information was collected from questionnaires measuring emotional demands using COPSOQ and the Male Role Norms Inventory (MRNI). The primary outcomes, self-reported absenteeism and presenteeism and mental health (SF-12) are analysed using Linear and Poisson regressions.

Results Emotional demands were associated with higher levels of sickness absenteeism and presenteeism, and poor mental health ($p < 0.01$ in all cases). Subgroup analyses showed no differences in the effect of emotional demands on sickness absence, whereas the subgroup with low MRNI-score showed relatively stronger associations between emotional demands and presenteeism. Additional analysis showed that participants with high MRNI-score were more affected by emotional demands in terms of their mental health than participants with lower MRNI-score.

Conclusions The study confirms the association between emotional demands and absenteeism, and furthermore showed that the effect of emotional demands on mental health varies according to adherence to traditional male role norms. The presentation will furthermore include results from prospective analyses on not-yet collected follow-up data on absenteeism taken from a national register.