FUTURE OF WORK, AND STRATEGIC RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NORDIC OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH RESEARCH INSTITUTES


Introduction

Emerging risks, and constantly changing technologies which have an impact on the world of work require a continuously updated knowledgebase for policy makers and practitioners. The Nordic research institutes have a unique position in this effort where they attempt to provide strategic research inputs to the Future of Work initiative.

Methods

Discussions in the group, Nordic research institutes inputs on strategic research perspectives looking in to the Future.

Results

Perspectives Reports provides insights in to the strategic needs, with regard to Future of Work and occupational health.

Discussion

The current perspectives report provided by the Nordic Future of Work Group, set up in 2016 as an initiative by the Director Generals of the Nordic Labour Inspectorates, has provided a basis upon which both the Nordic inspectorates and the Nordic institutes of occupational health have seen a need for building the knowledge base.

The broad mandate of the group includes the potential for recommending areas of research and research activities, and may as well include both continuous research within existing areas as well as potential new areas of research. Recommendations expected to come together with the research strategies of the Nordic institutes of occupational health in each Nordic country.

This presentation will provide some of the background for the strategic research perspectives from the Nordic countries aligned with the perspectives report and ongoing research on Future of Work.

WORKING ANYTIME, ANYWHERE: THE EFFECTS ON THE WORLD OF WORK

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Introduction

New information and communications technologies (ICT) have revolutionised everyday work and life in the 21st century. They enable people to connect with friends and family as well as with colleagues and supervisors at any point in time; however, they also facilitate the encroachment of paid work into the spaces and times normally reserved for personal life. The uncoupling of paid work from traditional office spaces has been a crucial factor in this development. Today’s office work and, more broadly, knowledge work, is supported by the internet, and can be carried out from practically any location and at any time. This new spatial independence has transformed the role of technology in the work environment, offering both new opportunities and new challenges.

This report considers the impact of telework/ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM) on the world of work. T/ICTM can be defined as the use of ICT – such as smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers – for the purposes of work outside the employer’s premises. The report synthesises research carried out by Eurofound’s network of European correspondents in 10 EU Member States – Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK – and by ILO country experts in Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan and the US. These contributors were asked to review and summarise the findings of data and research literature on the subject of T/ICTM in their respective countries.

The report was carried out by Eurofound and the ILO in 2015. The questionnaire was used to structure and compile the data on T/ICTM available in each country analysed in this report. The breadth and depth of available data on T/ICTM vary substantially across the 15 countries observed. Data sources in all the national studies include large-scale surveys with individuals, while some include surveys with households and companies. Other information sources include research studies, in-depth interviews with experts and employers, white papers,