

Distance management and psychosocial work environment in knowledge work

Work-related stress continues to be an unresolved problem and the second most frequent work-related health issue in Europe. Studies carried out recently show that managers and their managerial style are important elements in ensuring a sustainable production system where a balance is struck between high performance and well-being at work. Nevertheless, knowledge of how this is translated into practice is still limited.

Associate professor at the Department of Management Engineering, the Technical University of Denmark (DTU), Christine Ipsen, has for several years studied the organisation and management of knowledge work with a particular focus on work-related stress and the challenge of striking a balance between well-being of knowledge workers and high performance requirements.

In her most recent project, Christine Ipsen focused on teleworking and distance management and on how workplaces using teleworking can strike a balance between productivity and well-being of workers. The purpose of the project was to investigate how distance managers, teleworkers, project managers and customers interact and how these relationships can be strengthened and improved to benefit both productivity and teleworkers' well-being.

Research in distance management focusing on productivity and well-being of workers is a relatively new discipline, which is why it is relevant to promote Danish knowledge in the field and become acquainted with the findings of other researchers. Participation in the 19th Triennial Congress of the International Ergonomics Association (IEA 2015), with the theme "Reach Out, in August 2015 in Australia, will allow dissemination of the findings of the Danish research project and give insight into how the issue is addressed in other countries.

COWIfonden has donated funds to cover the costs of conference participation and setting up a meeting between Christina Ipsen and Professor Andrew Noblet and colleagues at the Department of Management, Deakin University, Australia, to exchange knowledge of projects, methodologies and findings. The Australian researchers are particularly interested in learning more about Christine Ipsen's research on small and medium-sized enterprises whereas Christine Ipsen is keen on learning more about Deakin University's research on performance management and sustainable knowledge work and finding inspiration to DTU's new master class "Implementation and Performance Management". It is anticipated that the visit will pave the way for new cooperation between the universities, such as exchange of Ph.D. students, joint research applications and/or scientific publications on the implementation of changes to ensure a sustainable production system, in other words, one where a balance is struck between high performance and well-being of workers.