

NORDIC QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR MONITORING THE AGE DIVERSE WORKFORCE  
(QPSNORDIC-ADW)

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Ageing workforce and its working conditions and preferences constitute a central issue in every western country. In order to get elderly people to continue in work life until their normal pension age, their preferences and needs must be accounted. A valid monitoring instrument is needed for these purposes.

The Nordic project group was given the task of developing a questionnaire for monitoring the needs and preferences of elderly employees. The goal was to develop a questionnaire which should be applicable for interventions at workplaces and for research purposes. The project group comprised researchers from Finland, Norway and Sweden.

The General Nordic Questionnaire for Psychological and Social Factors at Work (QPSNordic) was selected as the basis for the new questionnaire, since in 1994-1998 considerable effort was focussed on producing a valid questionnaire for psychological and social factors at work. Moreover, QPSNordic includes scales relevant for the older age groups, and it has been used widely in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

During the process of validation of the new questionnaire, two sets of data were used. The first data set (n=42318) was used to study the factor structure of the QPSNordic. The data from the AHA project (Arbete och hälsa inom process och verkstadsindustrin) of Karolinska Institute was selected since it provided a vast body of data for the testing the questionnaire.

Based on these analyses, a restructuring of the QPSNordic scales was carried out. Questions were also added based on literature study carried out. The new questionnaire, the Nordic Questionnaire for Monitoring Age Diverse Workforce (QPSNordic-ADW), includes questions on the future needs and preferences of older workers, work motivation, age discrimination, and retirement thoughts. Scales measuring well-being are also presented.

The content areas of the QPSNordic-ADW were classified according to the conceptual level. The task level scales were established job demands, role expectations and control of work, while the social and organizational level scales consist of social interactions, leadership, organizational culture, bullying and harassment. The individual level scales consist of predictability at work, preference of challenge, interaction between work and private life, commitment to organization, work motivation, and age discrimination.

In the second part of the project, the construct and predictive validity of the scales of QPSNordic-ADW was tested on members of teachers' unions from Finland, Norway and Sweden (n=1001). The QPSNordic-ADW includes 97 questions, of which 73 compose 22 scales. Internal consistency of the scales varied between 0.61 and 0.91 measured by Cronbach's alpha. 24 single items measure their own content area. In addition, 13 questions on personal and organizational background factors are included. The validation process used multiple outcomes. All criterion measures were based on self-report scales.

Redesigning work as a prevention strategy for elderly employees and encouraging their continuing at work is in central focus. The Nordic countries have been forerunners for instance in implementing age management and the maintenance of work ability at workplaces. Therefore, this methodological contribution from the Nordic countries will also be valuable on a more general level in the Western countries.

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