

# Fairness at work can affect employees' health

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Employees' experiences of fairness at work can impact on their health, according to a new study involving the University of East Anglia (UEA).

The researchers investigated whether perceptions of what they call '[procedural justice](#)', such as the processes in place to decide on rewards, pay, promotion and assignments, are related to [employees'](#) health.

They found that when perceptions of [fairness](#) changed, the self-rated health of employees also changed, for example those who experienced more fairness on average over the period studied reported better health.

The finding suggests that fairness at [work](#) is a crucial aspect of the [psychosocial work environment](#) and that changes towards greater fairness can improve employees' health.

It was also found that changes in employees' health are related to changes in fairness perceptions, indicating that the health status of employees may also affect how employees feel treated at work.

The study, which focused on more than 5800 people working in Sweden, was conducted by Dr Constanze Eib, a lecturer in organisational behaviour at UEA's Norwich Business School, and researchers from Stockholm University. The results are published in the Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health.

Dr Eib said: "Our study provides a thorough examination of how fairness at the workplace and health of employees is related over time. The

findings can help raise awareness among employers and authorities that fairness at work but also health is important to consider to increase satisfaction, well-being and productivity in the workplace and wider society.

"It is important to know about these issues as there may be things that can be done to improve perceptions of fairness at work. For example, making sure people feel their views are considered, they are consulted about changes and that decisions are made in an unbiased way.

"People who feel fairly treated are not only more likely to be motivated at work and go the extra mile for their organisation, but they are also more likely to be healthy, have an active lifestyle and feel positive."

The study used data collected between 2008 and 2014 for the Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health, which is conducted every two years and focuses on the associations between work organisation, [work environment](#) and health.

Participants were asked to rate their general state of health on a scale from one to five, one being 'very good' and five being 'very poor'.

They were asked about their perception of fairness by saying to what extent they agreed or disagreed with seven statements relating to their organisation's decision-making processes. These included 'hear the concerns of all those affected by the decision', 'provide opportunities to appeal or challenge the decision' and 'all sides affected by the decision are represented'.

'The influence of procedural justice and change in procedural justice on self-rated [health](#) trajectories: Results from the Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health', Constanze Leineweber, Constanze Eib, Paraskevi Peristera, and Claudia Bernhard-Oettel, is published in the

*Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health.*

**More information:** The influence of procedural justice and change in procedural justice on self-rated health trajectories: Results from the Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health, *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*, 2016.

Provided by University of East Anglia

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