

**Improving Occupational Wellbeing and Managing Sickness  
Absences in the Paper Industry (Hyvis-project)  
Results of the project from Paperiliitto's point of view**

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## Planning and Goal of the Study - 14.5.2007 Steering Group meeting

- The aim of the study is not to compare results between the companies but to find/develop good practices
- The objective is to collect information on various mills, in order to reveal different historical and cultural practices concerning occupational wellbeing
- Factors considered as influencing (Long term) sickness absences:
  - The ratio between the demand and worker's competence
  - Feeling, culture of management/ ambience
  - Possibilities to influence
- The role of work groups in the paper industry is important, their influence on occupational wellbeing has not been studied before

## Development of the project

- The first plan of action was presented 26 June 2007
- The number and situation of the mills to be included in the study caused discussion
- Apart from the UMP Tervasaari mill, information on previous studies was available
- The last similar study was carried out 10 years ago
- Entire mills were studied including differences between departments/shifts
- Focus was on workers in the paper industry
- Basic study was carried out in 2 years – actions thereafter and the follow up were important
- Project funding was granted by the Finnish Work Environment Fund 11.12.2007

## Development of the project 2

- Reception of the project at the mill was very important
  - communication
  - motivation, "selling" of the idea of the study
- Collecting information
  - enquiries
  - interviews
  - Previous documentation
  - other studies
- Analysis and publication of the results
- Further measures

# Timetable for Hyvis-project

Task & responsibility	2008												2009											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Finnish Institute of Occupational Health																								
Analysis of the situation at the start	■	■															■	■	■	■	■			
Planning the survey	■	■	■	■													■	■						
Analysis of the survey data						■	■	■															■	■
Combining survey and registered data								■	■	■	■	■											■	■
Analysis of registered data												■	■	■	■	■							■	■
Interviews								■	■	■														
Analysis of interview material										■	■	■	■	■	■	■						■	■	
Analysis of good practices													■	■	■	■								
Reporting									■	■						■	■						■	■
Follow up of changes and development activities									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Work shop seminars									■							■		■						■
Mills	■	■	■	■	■																			
Collecting information for the analysis at the start	■	■	■	■	■																			
Preparing the survey			■	■															■	■				
Collecting survey data					■	■															■	■		
Collecting interview material								■	■	■	■										■	■		
Planning and implementing development activities									■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Steering group	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Steering group meetings		■		■				■			■		■			■								

## Hyvis-project 14.5.2007 – 8.6.2010

Different themes	6
Seminars	4
Reports	8
Summaries of the reports	5
Press releases	7
Press releases of the mills	13
Presentations of the results	25
Steering group meetings	18
Steering group members	16
Other participants in the project	12

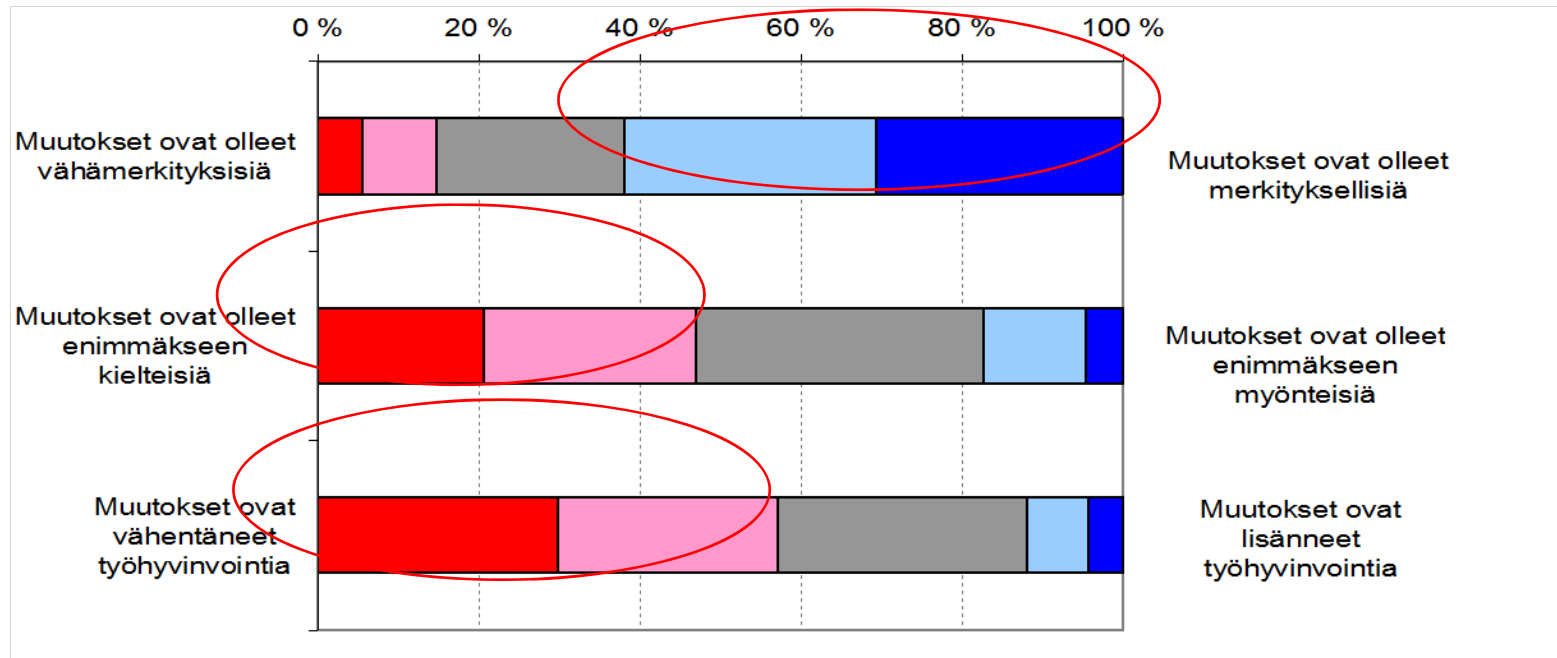
# Handling of changes and developing actions in a case of restructuring

(slide in Finnish)

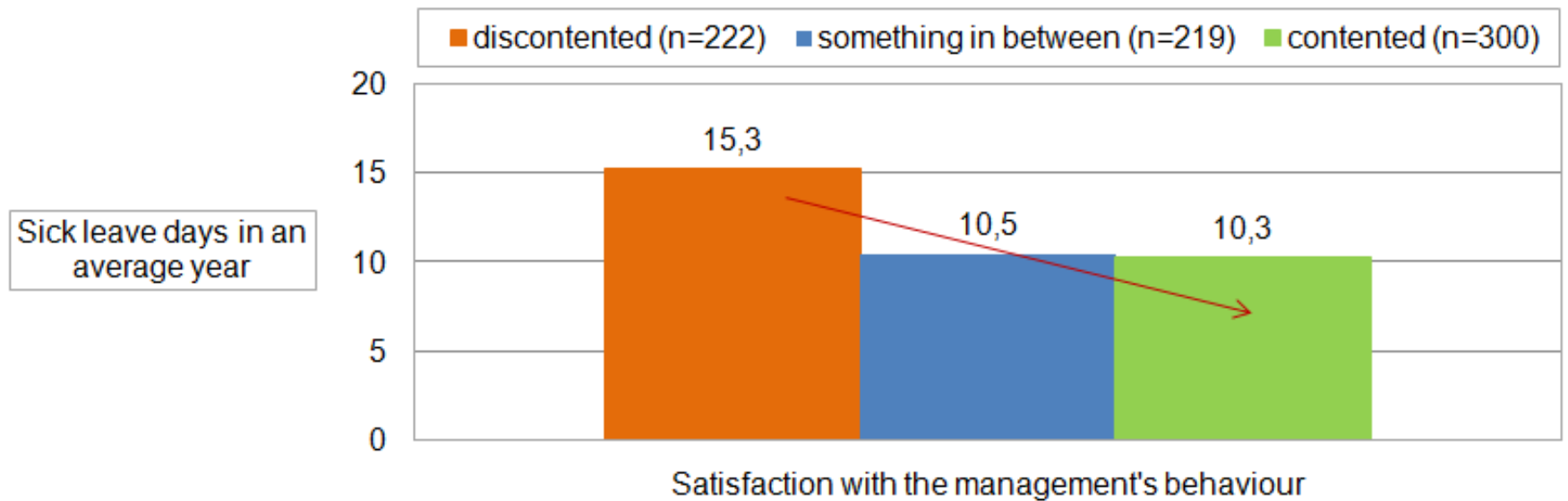


## MUUTOSTEN MERKITYS

HYVIS 2009

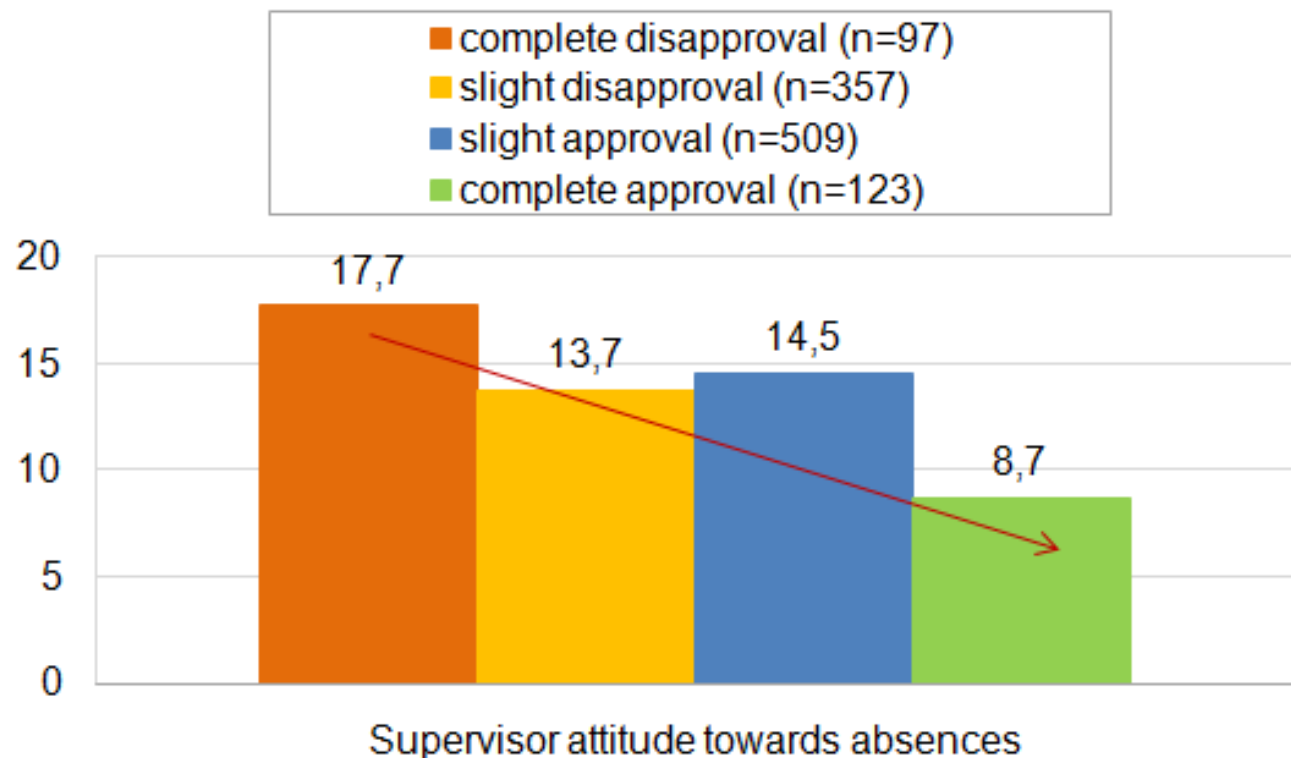


### Correlation between the management implementing changes and the number of sick leave days



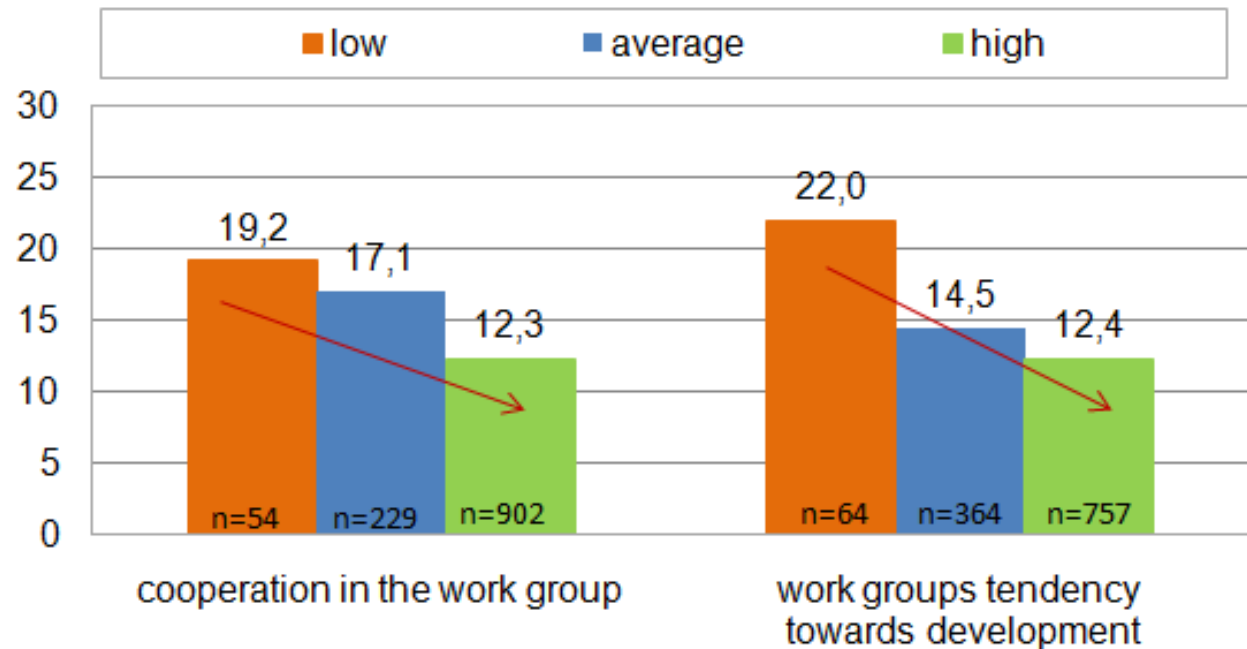
## Correlation between the supervisor behaviour and the number of sick leave days

Sick leave days in an average year

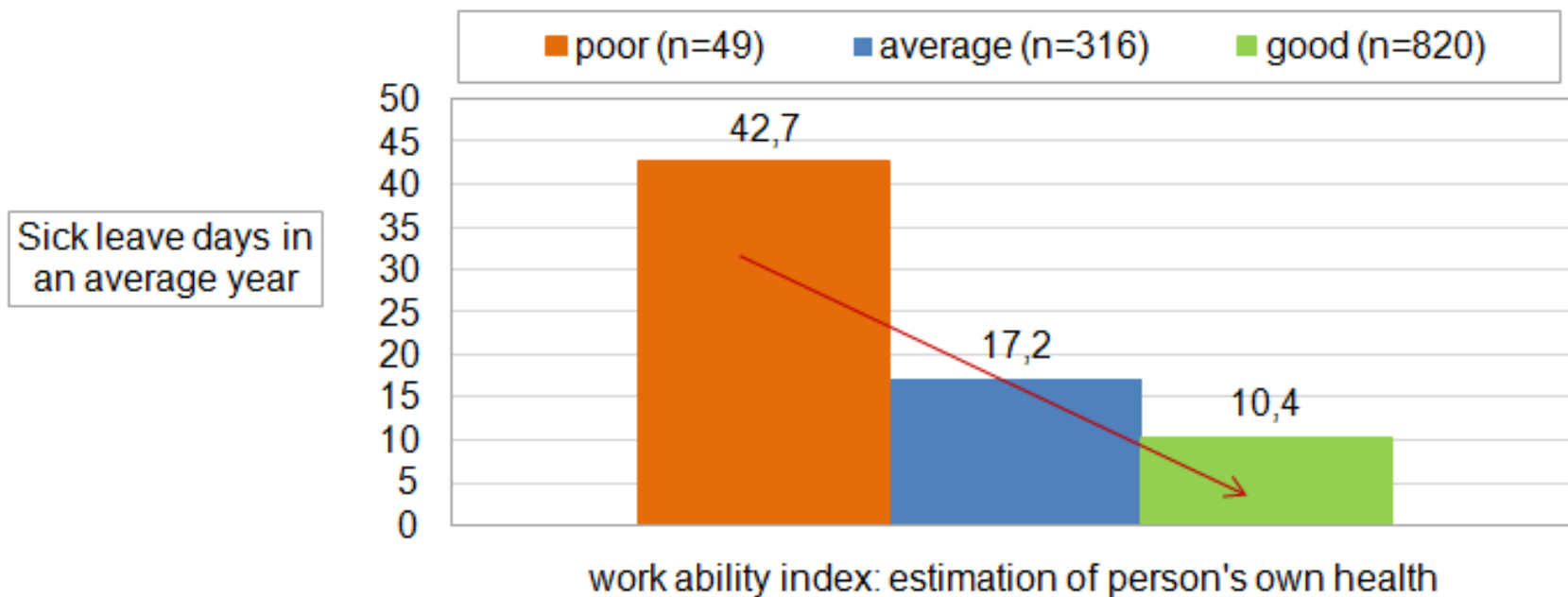


## Correlation between functioning of the work group and the number of sick leave days

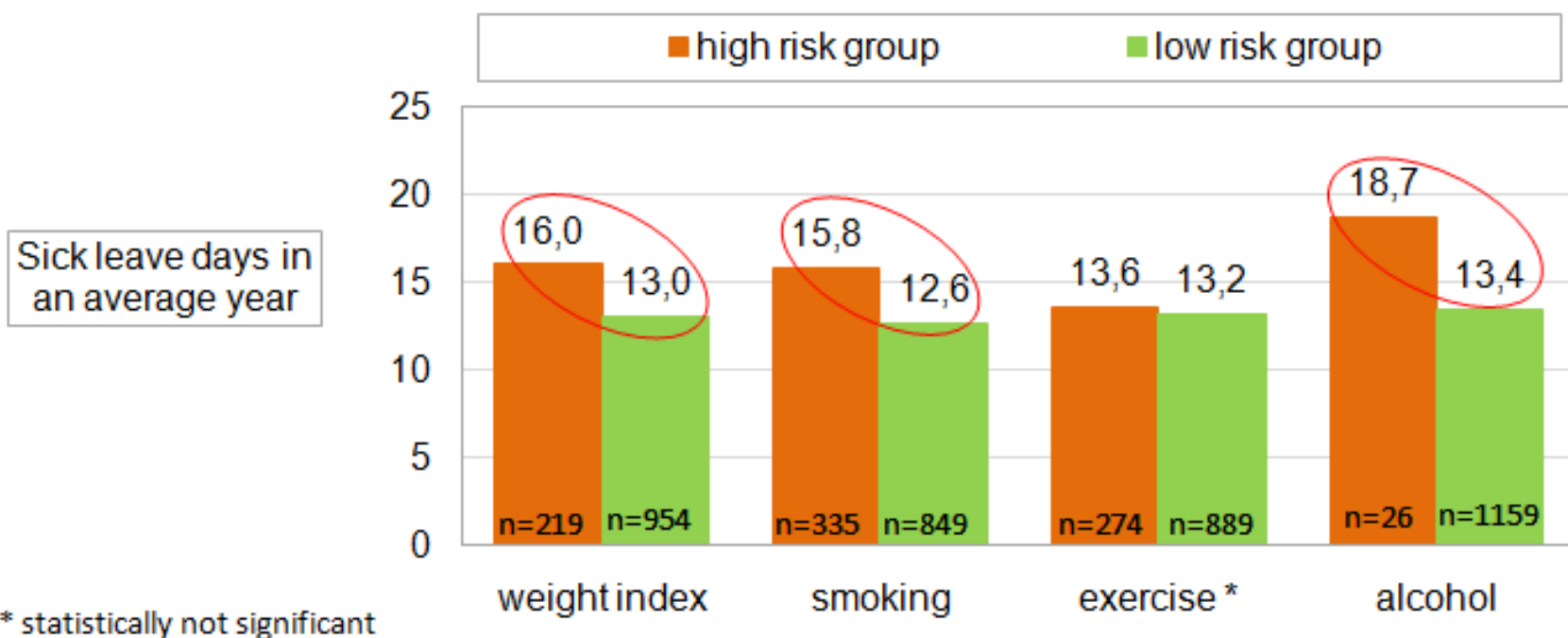
Sick leave days in an average year



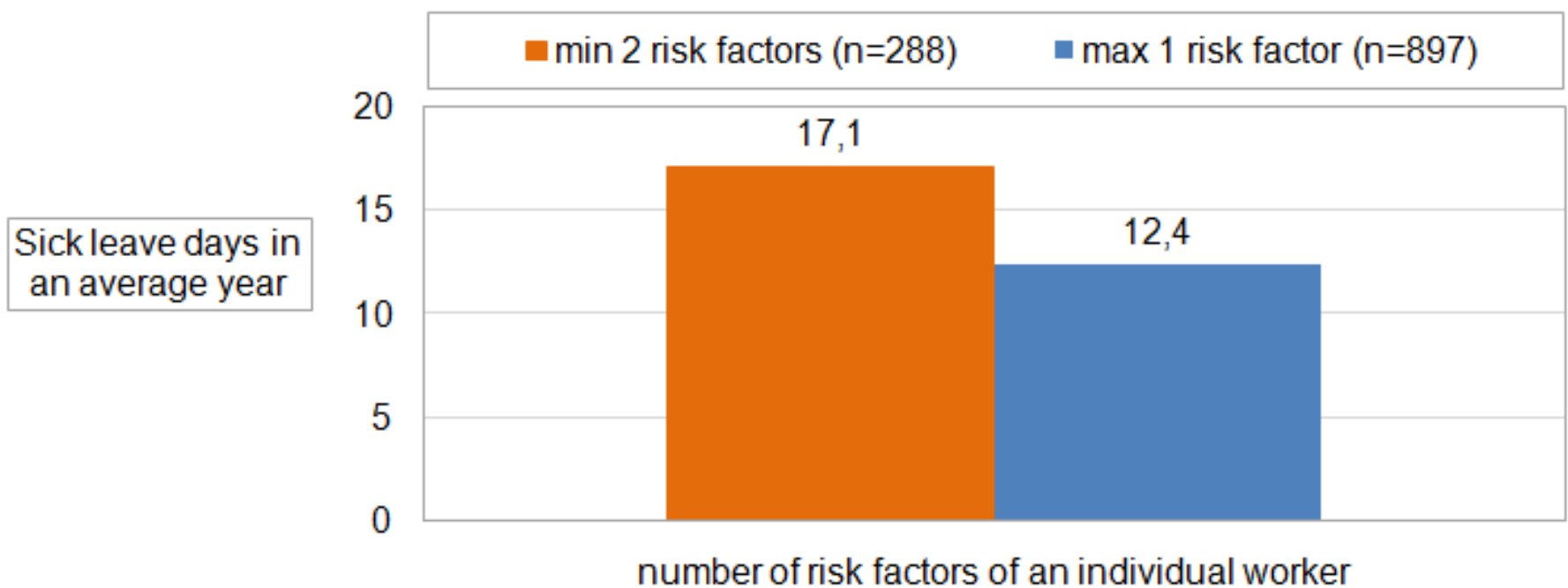
## Correlation between estimated ability to work and the number of sick leave days



## Correlation between individual health behaviour and the number of sick leave days



### Correlation between the amount of risk factors of an individual worker and the number of sick leave days



# Hyvis-project on the shop floor

Results of a survey during Paperiliitto's seminar on collective bargaining and occupational safety 2010:

## **1. Have the good practices mentioned in the HYVIS – material been discussed at your workplace?**

- No: in most of the mills
- Yes: in about 40 % of the branch offices

## **2. If yes, what are the topics and are they being introduced into practice?**

- Model of early care – supervisor training – don't bully -guide, return-to-work discussions
- Training for the maintenance of occupational competency
- spiritual and physical wellbeing

# HYVIS "on the shop floor"

A significant aim of the study was to find good practices and ways to act to help improve occupational wellbeing and reduce sickness absences.

## **1. Have the good practices mentioned in the HYVIS – materials been discussed at your work place?**

- Not yet: in most of the mills
- Yes: in 12 local branches
- No: in 16 local branches

## **2. If yes, what are the topics and are they being put into practice?**

- Model of early care – supervisor training – don't bully -guide, return-to-work discussions
- Training for the maintenance of occupational competency
- spiritual and physical wellbeing

# HYVIS "on the shop floor level"!

## **3. In what other way are you going to make good use of the study in your own work?**

- Giving the results of the study a high profile
- Studying the project material and getting the employer committed to its contents
- Exchanging good practices at work places

Apart from these issues / teamwork we reviewed the occupational safety survey 2010, and some other current issues

# Strengths

- Common goal
- Impartial research
- Work groups at mills
- Preparations beforehand and communication
- Wide and comprehensive material
- Combining previous documentation with the results of the study
- Part-reports, information and the project's web-pages
- Active steering group
- Collating and presenting the results of the study in different arenas e.g. TTL's forest workshops, Paptap, different seminars both home and abroad

# Weaknesses

- Poor response to the survey
- Lay-off exercises in the mills (-28 %)
- Resources: time, money, changes in staff
- Poor/unclear communication of the results of the project
- Different views on how to reach a common goal
- Recommendations on the measures to be taken based on the conclusions

# Possibilities

- Develop permanent results
- Focus on the reasons for sickness absences and resolve these issues
- Take the results to the shop floor and apply them to the whole branch
- Produce results and an impact on the image of the various companies within the branch by improving occupational wellbeing
- Produce a concrete product from the practices improving occupational wellbeing and make them available for distribution
- Seek actively and genuinely to develop occupational wellbeing and submit results gained and measures taken to impartial organizations for evaluation (Great Place to Work Institute...)
- PSYRES-additional project

# Threats

- Hyvis "will be forgotten"
- Failure to transmit the results to the shop floor
- Lack of agreement on how to transfer the results to the shop floor
- The transmission of the results to the shop floor is not systematic
- Sanctions/ controls vs. self-desire for changes
- Restricted implementation of the results
- Results are not compared with similar research in other fields and other countries
- Recommendations / additional projects are not implemented

# **HYVIS – summary of the results:**

- Improvement in occupational wellbeing results in reduction of sickness absences
- By influencing their own work environment a worker can improve their occupational wellbeing
- Supervisor's understanding attitude towards absences reduces them
- In the long run, investing in occupational wellbeing is better than a strict control
- Finding out the reasons for sickness absences is a prerequisite for improving occupational wellbeing
- Content and motivated personnel are an essential precondition to permanent reduction in sick leave