GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TIME PRESSURE AND HEALTH AMONG JOURNALISTS


Aims
The first study aimed to shed light on where differences between male and female journalists, between journals of different size and between editorial work in a big city and a provincial town. We have been studying whether, and in that case how, working conditions and health for women and men have been influenced by the integration of the sexes that has taken place parallel to technological development. In the follow-up study we focussed on gender differences in time pressure and health.

Methods
Questionnaires for self-evaluation, interviews and observation were used as methods to analyze working conditions, workload and health. One big, one medium sized and one small daily newspaper were included in the study. A total of 317 answered the questionnaire, while in two of the news offices 24 journalists were interviewed and observed with regard to their working conditions and health.

Results
As a profession journalism has for long been male dominated, but is now showing a bigger share of women. Between 1989 and 2000 the share of women rose from 34 to 47 percent and the increase seems to be going on. Through this, the journalist profession has become one of the few professions with a balanced gender division.

Today’s situation is according to our study to a certain degree still marked by a traditional gender order.

Profile illustrations indicate similar patterns for the editorial offices we studied. Time pressure was surprisingly identical irrespective of financial status, number of employees and circulation. It was the everyday production process of a new issue that controlled the work environment. Pressure to produce quickly was as high for the slimmed organisation of the big city newspaper, which was competing on a tough media market, as for the small newspaper that struggled for survival. Similar to working life at large the tendency was an increasing pace of work.

High pressure in time indicated high demands. Evaluations of stress levels in our study indicated co-variations with the level of demands in this respect. The connection between stress evaluation and ailments were a rather general feature for all the three editorial offices and most blatantly for the women. The profiles were showing the importance of the different health variables. Health results were different for women and men. The work situation did not explain the entire difference in health outcomes. What also seemed to be important was that the physical design of the workplaces was not adapted to women to a sufficient degree.

In the follow-up study we found that 62 percent of the women and 54 percent of the men reported that time pressure had increased during the last two years. Work load had increased more among the women (72 percent compared to 39 percent among the men) and the women we more restricted to their computer work than the men and it had increased from the initial study. The women also reported more musculoskeletal and psychosocial symptoms than the men and an increase from the first study was seen.

Conclusions
Journalists report high pressure in time in their job and our study indicates that more women than men experience increase in time pressure during the last couple of years. The female journalists also reported more musculoskeletal as well as psychosocial symptoms than the male journalists.

References