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Comparison of Servant Leadership (SL) at hospital wards in Denmark, Iceland and Sweden: A NOVO Multicenter study

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1. Background

Leadership support is essential regarding healthcare professionals' psychosocial work environment, job satisfaction, health and turnover intentions.

2. Aim

To investigate if there were differences between hospital wards in three Nordic countries as regards servant leadership (SL). A second aim was to examine the associations between SL, job satisfaction and health.

3. Material and Methods

Questionnaire-based cross-sectional studies were undertaken at hospital wards in Denmark, Iceland and Sweden. The study included 516 healthcare professionals. Oral and written information were given regarding the main aims of the study and that the study would follow strict guidelines of confidentiality. Employees' perceptions of *SL* were *measured* using a *23-item* six-dimensional *SL* scale (van Dierendonck & Nuijten 2011). These six dimensions were: empowerment, standing back, accountability, courage, humility and stewardship. Each SL-item was rated using a six-point Likert-type scale where high scores represent employees who perceived *high servant leadership* behavior in their leaders (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). Job satisfaction and health were measured using items from the COPSOQ questionnaire (Pejtersen *et al.*, 2010).

4. Results

There was a significant difference of SL scores between the Nordic countries, $F(8,507) = 4.27$, $p < 0.001$. The mean values were within the range of 3.80-4.89 on a six-point scale. Results indicate that dimension mean values vary within SL. Also, there were significant correlations between SL and job satisfaction and health.

5. Conclusions

The results suggest that SL at hospital wards varies between the three Nordic countries and that SL is associated with job satisfaction and health.

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