

Occupational safety and health risks of gig workers in Finland

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Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



Introduction

- Non-standard work may have adverse effects on occupational safety and health (OSH); for example, it may increase the risk of accidents (Hintikka, 2011; Quinlan et al., 2001).
- Employees in temporary agency work and fixed-term employment face a higher risk of mortality compared to permanent employees (Balogh et al. 2021).

Introduction

- Fixed-term workers do not have more occupational injuries than permanent workers (Saloniemi and Salminen, 2010).
- Part-time and casual health care workers have a lower occupational injury risk than full-time workers (Alamgir et al., 2008).
- Part-time work is a preventive factor for back injuries among nursing personnel (Engkvist et al., 2001).

Aim

- The aim of this study was to determine the main OSH risks for gig workers.
- In this study, gig workers are defined as employees working in temporary (or fixed-term) employment or as temporary agency workers.

Materials and Methods

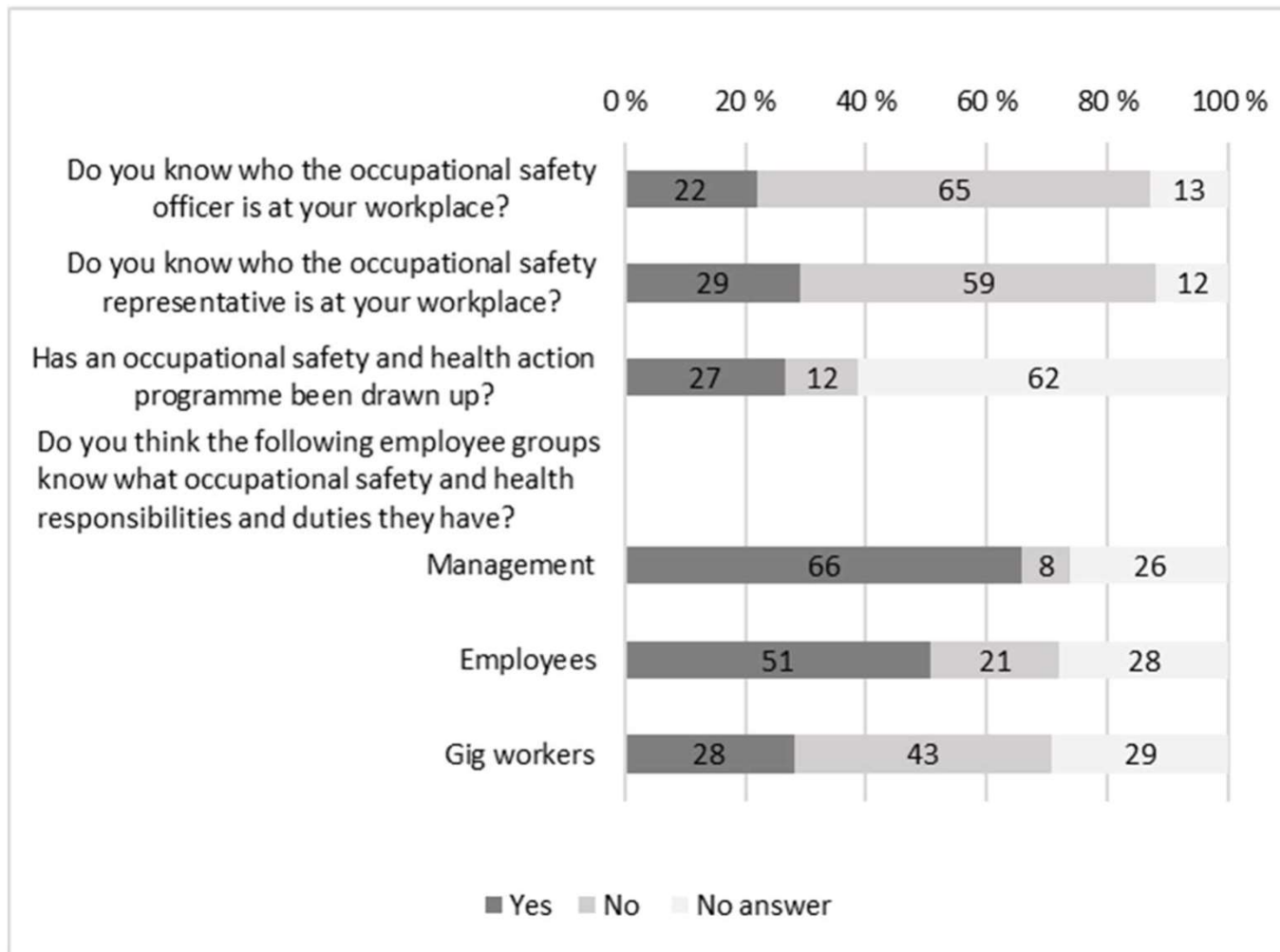
- An e-survey
 - background questions
 - questions about OSH organisation and responsibilities
 - 25 risk assessment sections
 - Risk evaluation scale:
 - Risk exists and requires action
 - Risk is under control
 - No risk

Materials and Methods

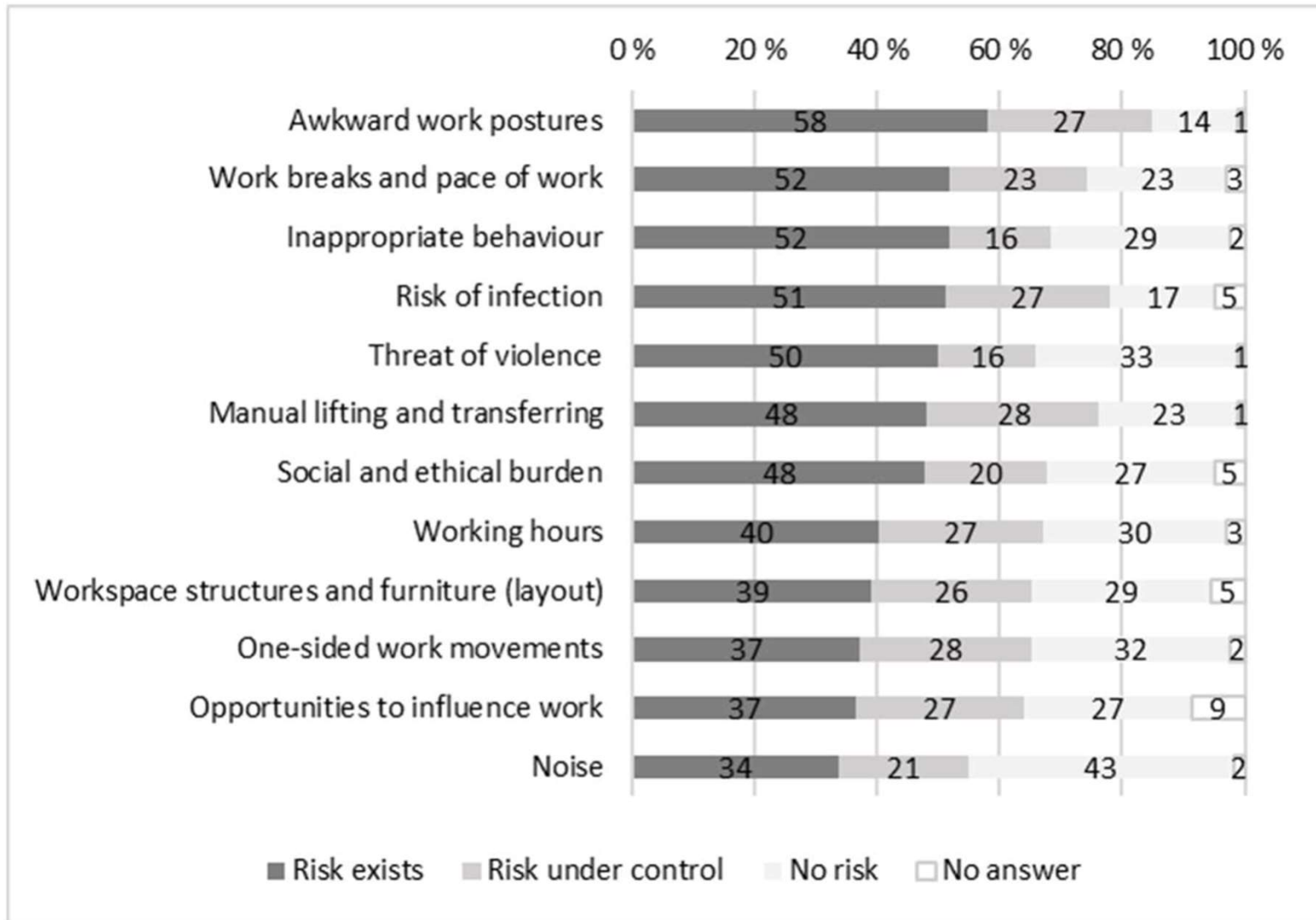
- 164 gig workers in Finland
- The sample of convenience was collected in 2020–2022
- Most (59%) worked in the health care and social services (HCSS) sector
- Work experience as a gig worker:
 - 26% less than a year
 - 63% at least one year
 - 11% no answer

Results

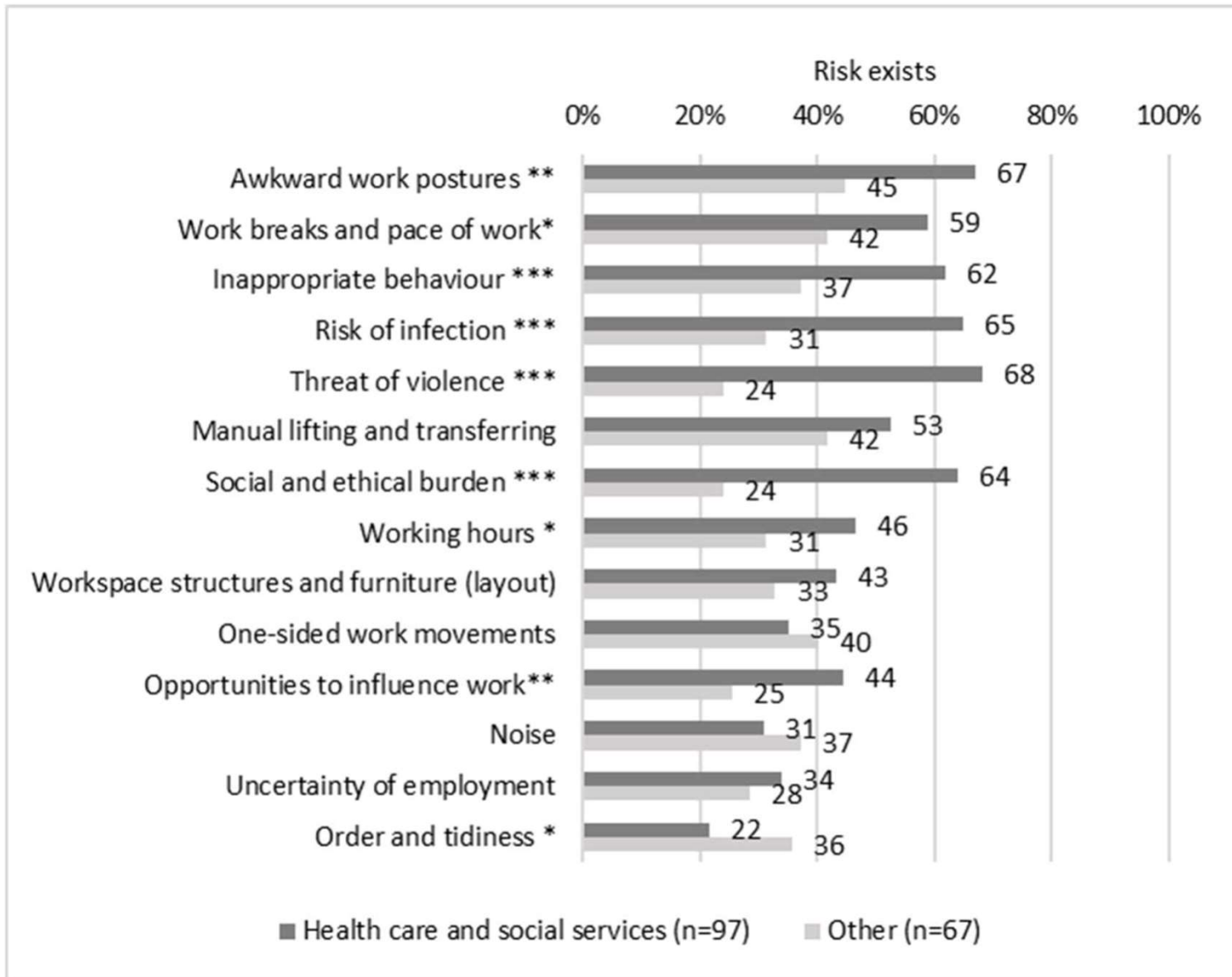
Knowledge of OSH organisation and responsibilities



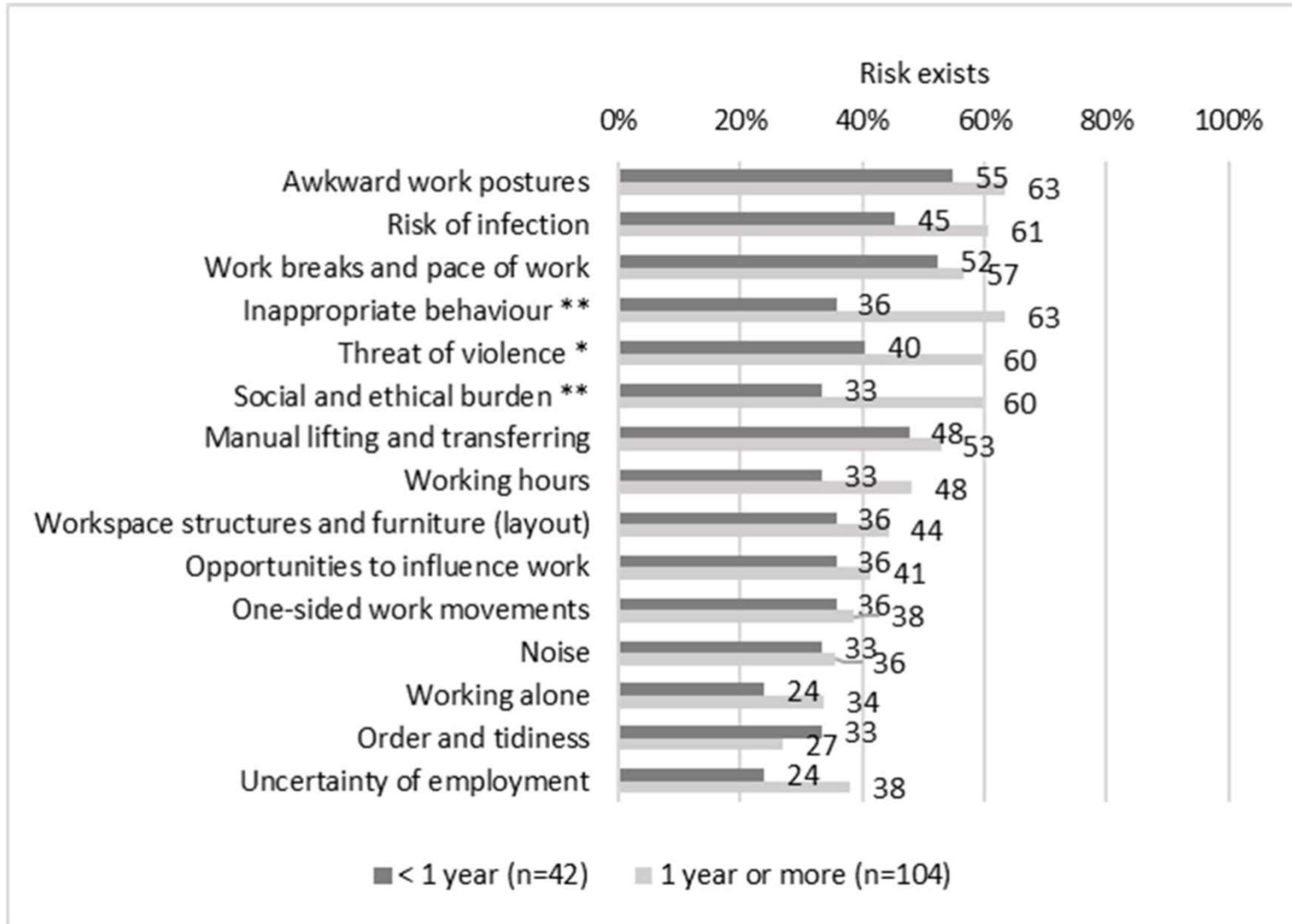
Risk assessment



Comparison between work sectors



Comparisons according to work experience as a gig worker



Discussion

- A lack of knowledge of gig workers about their OSH responsibilities and duties may indicate that they feel their orientation is insufficient, as Hopkins (2017) found.
- Poor knowledge of responsibilities and duties may be a risk to OSH.
- More experienced gig workers perceived more risks. This may be due to increased awareness or different work tasks.
- The results of risk assessments should be included in the orientation.

Conclusions

- The main OSH risks for gig workers are awkward work postures, work breaks and pace of work, and inappropriate behaviour.
- A minority of the respondents thought that gig workers know their own OSH responsibilities and duties.
- This lack of knowledge can also constitute an OSH risk.
- Better orientation based on the results of risk assessments might improve the OSH of gig workers.

References

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