

Organisational justice and smoking: the Finnish Public Sector Study

Anne Kouvonen¹, Jussi Vahtera², Marko Elovainio³, Sara J. Cox¹, Tom Cox¹,
Anne Linna², Marianna Virtanen² and Mika Kivimäki^{2,4}

¹Institute of Work, Health & Organisations, University of Nottingham, UK

²Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki, Finland

³National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health
(STAKES), Helsinki, Finland

⁴International Centre for Health and Society, Department of Epidemiology and
Public Health, University College London Medical School, UK

Correspondence to:

Anne Kouvonen, PhD

Institute of Work, Health & Organisations, University of Nottingham, 8 William
Lee Buildings, Nottingham Science and Technology Park, University
Boulevard, Nottingham NG7 2RQ, UK; anne.kouvonen@nottingham.ac.uk

Phone: +44 115 84 66747

Fax: -

Word count: 214 (abstract), 3648 (main text)

Keywords: Psychosocial factors; Smoking; Organisational justice.

“The Corresponding Author has the right to grant on behalf of all authors and does grant on behalf of all authors, an exclusive licence (or non-exclusive for government employees) on a worldwide basis to the BMJ Publishing Group Ltd and its Licensees to permit this article (if accepted) to be published in JECH and any other BMJPGJL products to exploit all subsidiary rights, as set out in our licence.”

ABSTRACT

Study Objective: To examine the extent to which justice of decision-making procedures and interpersonal relations is associated with smoking.

Setting: Ten municipalities and 21 hospitals in Finland.

Design and Participants: Cross-sectional data derived from the Finnish Public Sector Study were analysed with logistic regression analysis models with generalized estimating equations. Analyses of smoking status were based on 34 021 employees. Separate models for heavy smoking (≥ 20 cigarettes per day) were calculated for 6295 current smokers.

Main results: After adjustment for age, education, socio-economic position, marital status, job contract, and negative affectivity, smokers who reported low procedural justice were about 1.4 times more likely to smoke ≥ 20 cigarettes per day compared with their counterparts with high justice. In a similar way, after adjustments, low justice in interpersonal treatment was significantly associated with an elevated prevalence of heavy smoking (odds ratio (OR) = 1.35, 95% CI = 1.03 to 1.77 for men and OR = 1.41, 95% CI = 1.09 to 1.83 for women). Further adjustment for job strain and effort-reward imbalance had little effect on these results. There were no associations between justice components and smoking status or ex-smoking.

Conclusions: The extent to which employees are treated with justice in the workplace seems to be associated with smoking intensity independently of established stressors at work.

Organisational justice refers to the extent to which employees are treated with justice at their workplace,[1][2] and it can be divided into a procedural component and an interactional component. The former indicates whether decision-making procedures include input from affected parties, are consistently applied, suppress bias, and are accurate, correctable, and ethical.[3] The latter element refers to the polite and considerate treatment of individuals by supervisors when procedures are implemented.[4][5]

In more general terms, organisational justice is a construct defining the quality of social interaction at work.[6][7] Justice, altruism and equity are among the most fundamental questions concerning social relations and the organisation of the society.[8][9][10] Just treatment at work is important because it may communicate status and value.[11]

Poor organisational justice has been associated with various indicators of ill health such as minor psychiatric morbidity, poor self-reported health, sickness absence and incident coronary heart disease.[11][12][13][14][15] However, the mechanisms underlying these associations are not well known. In principle, organisational justice, like other psychosocial factors, could be related to health outcomes directly through physiological stress mechanisms and indirectly through health-risk behaviours, such as smoking.[16]

Prior research on psychosocial work-related factors and smoking has been concentrated on job strain and effort-reward imbalance (ERI). The demand/control model posits that job strain occurs when excessive job

demands are combined with low job control.[17][18] Exposure to job strain elicits sustained stress reactions with negative long-term consequences for health. The ERI model considers the impact of labour market conditions on health in addition to more proximal job conditions.[19] According to this model, health risk derives from the mismatch between efforts expended at work and rewards received in turn in terms of money, social approval, job security, and career opportunities.

Some studies have found an association between high job strain and smoking.[20][21][22] However, null results have also been reported,[23][24][25][26] and higher strain has been related to a lower prevalence of smoking.[27] In a recent study,[28] high job strain was associated with more intensive smoking among current smokers and with a higher likelihood of current smoking among ever-smokers. Moreover, high ERI has been associated with a greater likelihood of smoking.[29] In contrast, the relationship between organisational justice and smoking has largely remained unexamined. Low procedural justice was associated with increased prevalence of smoking in female hospital employees.[14] However, uncertainty remains whether organisational justice is only a marker for other work-related psychosocial factors that might influence smoking.

The objective of the present study was to investigate whether justice at work is associated with smoking among public sector employees, and whether this association is independent of other psychosocial characteristics of the work environment, such as job strain and ERI.

METHODS

Study population

Data were drawn from the ongoing prospective Finnish Public Sector Study,[30][31] which is focused on the entire personnel of ten towns and 21 hospitals. In 2000-2002, data on organisational justice, smoking habits, and other factors were collected through self-administered questionnaires from 39 255 women and 9337 men aged 17 to 65. Response rate was 68% and the sample did not substantially differ from the eligible population. In the ten town sub sample, figures for participants vs. eligible population (n = 47 351) were as follows: mean age 44.9 vs. 44.5 years, proportion of women 77% vs. 72%, proportions of upper non-manual, lower non-manual and manual employees 34%, 46%, 20% vs. 35%, 42% and 22%, respectively. The corresponding figures for the hospital sub sample (n = 23 610) were: mean age 43.1 vs. 43.1 years, proportion of women 87% vs. 84%, proportions of upper non-manual, lower non-manual and manual employees 16%, 77%, 8% vs. 13%, 81% and 7%, respectively.

The present study included those 27 121 women and 6900 men who provided complete data on smoking status, organisational justice, and all covariates.

Approval from the ethics committee of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health was obtained for the study.

Measurements

Organisational justice

The procedural justice scale (seven items, Cronbach alpha = .91) requested the degree to which respondents considered the procedures used at the workplace to be designed to collect accurate information necessary for making decisions, to provide opportunities to appeal or challenge the decision, to generate standards so that decisions could be made with consistency, and to hear the concerns of all those affected by the decision.[1]

The interactional justice scale (six items, Cronbach alpha = .92) requested whether respondents thought that their supervisors were able to suppress personal biases, to treat subordinates with kindness and consideration, and to take steps to deal with subordinates in a truthful manner.[1] In both scales responses were given on a five-point scale ranging from 1="strongly disagree" to 5="strongly agree".

Higher scores on the both scales indicated higher level of perceived justice. For the analyses, all participants were divided into three groups based on the distribution of the mean scores, the bottom third indicating a low level, the

middle third indicating an intermediate level, and the top third indicating a high level of justice.

Smoking

Smoking was measured in standard ways using the following questions: "Do you smoke or have you previously smoked regularly, that is, daily or nearly daily?", "If you have smoked, do you still smoke regularly?" and "How many cigarettes you smoke (or smoked) a day on average?" From this information, we derived smoking status (non-smoker vs. smoker); for ever-smokers ex-smoking status (ex-smoker vs. current smoker) and, for current smokers, smoking intensity (the number of cigarettes smoked per day). Smoking intensity was dichotomised (1 to 19 cigarettes and ≥ 20 cigarettes per day).

Other measurements

Several covariates were used. The following socio-demographic characteristics were measured: sex, age, education (common school, comprehensive or middle school, high school), marital status (married or co-habiting vs. single, divorced, or widowed), socio-economic position, and type of job contract (permanent vs. temporary). Sex, age, occupational status and type of job contract were obtained from the employers' registers. Age was grouped into five categories. Occupational titles were categorised into occupational positions of upper non-manual, lower non-manual, and manual according to the Statistics Finland five-digit occupational classification.

To reduce bias arising from individual differences in response styles, we used Trait Anxiety Inventory (six items; Cronbach alpha = .85) to control for negative affectivity.[32] The scale was dichotomised using the highest quartile as a cut-off point.

The job strain measure was derived from the Job Content Questionnaire.[33][34] Job control was assessed with nine questions about the worker's ability to use and develop skills and exert decision authority (Cronbach alpha = .83). Two questions addressed the demands of the job, that is, having high workload and working at a high pace (Cronbach alpha = .70). The responses were given on a Likert scale of 1="very little" to 5="very much". The total scores for each of the two constructs were computed.

To construct the job strain measure, the job demand and job control scales were first dichotomised at their median points. The resulting variables were then used to form the job strain indicator, which had the following four categories: low job strain (low demands and high control), active jobs (high demands and high control), passive jobs (low demands and low control), and high strain (high demands and low control).[18]

A standard measure of ERI in Finnish was not available in this study. The present questionnaire included one question about effort in work and three questions about rewards. These measures were used to construct the proxy measure of ERI. Effort in work was measured with the following question:

"How much do you feel you invest in your job in terms of skill and energy?" Rewards were assessed with a scale containing three questions about feelings of getting in return from work in terms of (1) income and job benefits, (2) recognition and prestige, and (3) personal satisfaction (Cronbach alpha = .64).[28][35] Response format for all the questions was a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1="very little" to 5="very much". The indicator of ERI was obtained by calculating the ratio between the response score in the effort scale and the mean response score in the reward scale. The resulting quotient was divided into tertiles to indicate low, intermediate, and high ERI.

If half or more of the component items were missing, a value of missing was recorded in the total scores of control, demands, and rewards.

Data analysis

We used the SAS version 9.1 program package (SAS Institute, Cary, NC, USA) for all analyses. Crosstabulations were used to assess differences in the levels of procedural and interactional justice between women and men, age groups, and by other background factors.

The data were likely to be clustered as employees who work in the same work unit might be expected to have something in common.[14] The responses could be affected by other employees in the same work unit. The number of work unit levels was 3113 (mean=10.9, SD=13.9, range 1-348).

To take the clustered nature of the data into account, we used logistic regression with generalized estimating equations (GEE) method with an exchangeable correlation structure corresponding to a random effect to correct for work unit level.[36] Sex-specific odds ratios (ORs) and their 95% confidence intervals (CIs) are presented. Separate models were calculated for heavy smoking (≥ 20 cigarettes per day) among current smokers.

The hypothetically most favourable condition (highest tertile) was selected as a reference category in each indicator of organisational justice in all analyses. Adjustments were made in three steps in order to distinguish the different types of confounders. In the first step, only age was adjusted for. In the second step, education, marital status, socio-economic position, job contract, and negative affectivity were added. In the third step, job strain and ERI were additionally included. Analyses were performed separately for women and men.

RESULTS

Seventeen percent of women and 24% of men were current smokers. Sixteen percent of women and 24% of men were ex-smokers. Men smoked more intensively: 29% of male smokers compared with 9% of female smokers smoked 20 or more cigarettes a day ($p < 0.001$).

Table 1 gives the characteristics of the participants and the level of the components of organisational justice (tertiles) by background factors. The levels of procedural and interactional justice were highest among the youngest and the oldest respondents. In addition, organisational justice was higher among upper non-manual than lower non-manual and manual employees with the exception that among women the level of procedural justice was equally high among manual and upper non-manual employees. ($p < 0.001$ in all cases).

Table 1 Characteristics of participants* and the levels of organisational justice (tertiles) by background factors

	Women						Men							
	<u>n (%)</u>	<u>Procedural justice</u>			<u>Interactional justice</u>			<u>n (%)</u>	<u>Procedural justice</u>			<u>Interactional justice</u>		
		Low	Interm	High	Low	Interm.	High		Low	Interm.	High	Low	Interm.	High
All	27121	31	32	36	31	34	35	6900	33	30	37	31	37	32
Age (in years)														
17-29	2191 (8)	24	34	42	26	33	41	430 (6)	27	30	43	22	33	46
30-39	6170 (23)	34	24	33	31	34	36	1582 (23)	35	30	35	30	38	32
40-49	9581 (35)	33	32	35	32	33	35	2276 (33)	36	30	34	33	36	32
50-59	8647 (32)	30	31	39	31	34	35	2384 (35)	31	29	40	33	37	30
60-64	532 (2)	26	30	44	27	33	41	228 (3)	23	25	52	23	39	38
		<i>p</i> <0.001			<i>p</i> <0.001				<i>p</i> <0.001			<i>p</i> <0.001		
Education														

Common school	5483 (20)	25	33	42	31	33	36	1884 (27)	37	32	32	36	35	28
Comprehensive/ middle school	7942 (29)	32	32	36	32	33	34	1941 (28)	36	31	33	34	37	29
High school	13 696 (51)	34	32	34	30	34	36	3075 (45)	29	28	44	26	37	37
			$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$				$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$	
Socio-economic status														
Manual	3262 (12)	26	33	41	36	32	32	2303 (33)	39	33	28	37	37	26
Lower non-manual	16 126 (59)	33	33	33	31	34	35	1966 (28)	36	29	35	32	36	32
Upper non-manual	7733 (29)	28	30	42	28	33	39	2631 (38)	25	27	48	25	37	38
			$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$				$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$	
Job contract														
Permanent	22 343 (82)	32	32	36	32	34	34	5986 (87)	34	29	36	33	37	31
Temporary	4778 (18)	27	34	39	26	33	41	914 (13)	24	31	46	22	35	43
			$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$				$p<0.001$			$p<0.001$	

Marital status

Married/cohabiting	20 290 (75)	31	32	37	30	34	36	5575 (81)	33	29	38	30	37	32
Other	6831 (25)	31	32	37	33	32	35	1325 (19)	33	31	36	35	34	31
		p = 0.838			p<0.001				p = 0.517			p = 0.005		

Negative affectivity

Low	20 318 (75)	28	33	39	27	34	38	5147 (75)	29	27	41	30	37	36
High	6803 (25)	40	32	28	42	32	27	1753 (25)	43	30	27	42	35	23
		p<0.001			p<0.001				p<0.001			p<0.001		

*Those with no missing data for procedural and interactional justice, smoking status, or any of the covariates in Models B

in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 shows the results from logistic regression analyses with generalized estimating equations on the associations between the two components of organisational justice and smoking status. In the age adjusted model, low interactional justice was significantly associated with prevalent smoking among women (OR=1.09, 95% CI = 1.01 to 1.19). However, the significant relationship disappeared after adjustment for other factors. Low procedural justice was not associated with a higher likelihood of smoking in women. In men, the associations between organisational justice components and smoking status were significant neither in age adjusted nor in fully adjusted models.

Adjusted ORs (95 CI%) from logistic regression models with generalized estimating equations for heavy smoking are presented in Table 3. Compared with conditions of high justice, low justice of decision-making procedures was associated with a 34% higher likelihood of smoking ≥ 20 cigarettes per day in women and a 44% higher likelihood in men after adjustment for age, education, marital status, socio-economic position, job contract, and negative affectivity. These associations remained after job strain and ERI were added into the models.

After adjustment for age, education, marital status, socio-economic position, job contract, and negative affectivity, female smokers in the lowest tertile of interactional justice had a 1.4-fold odds for smoking ≥ 20 cigarettes per day compared with the female smokers in the highest tertile of interactional justice

(OR =1.41, 95% CI = 1.09 to 1.83). The corresponding odds ratio for male smokers was 1.35 (95% CI = 1.03 to 1.77). Again, these odds ratios did not change after additional adjustment for job strain and ERI.

With regards to heavy smoking, we tested whether there were any significant interaction effects between the two dimensions of organisational justice and job strain or ERI by adding the interaction terms into the model. No significant interactions were found. (Data not shown.)

Table 2 Associations of procedural and interactional justice with smoking status: adjusted odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs) from logistic regression models with generalized estimating equations

		Odds Ratio, (95% CI), Adjusted for—		
No. of participants		Age (A)	A + education, SEP, marital status, job contract and NA (B)	B + job strain and ERI (C)
Women:		27121		
Procedural Justice				
High	9888	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	8740	0.96 (0.89 to 1.04)	0.95 (0.88 to 1.03)	0.94 (0.87 to 1.02)
Low	8493	1.04 (0.96 to 1.13)	1.05 (0.96 to 1.13)	1.02 (0.94 to 1.11)
Interactional Justice				
High	9642	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	9095	0.97 (0.90 to 1.05)	0.96 (0.89 to 1.04)	0.96 (0.88 to 1.03)
Low	8384	1.09 (1.01 to 1.19)	1.01 (0.93 to 1.10)	0.99 (0.91 to 1.07)
Men:		6900		
Procedural Justice				
High	2581	1.00	1.00	1.00

Intermediate	2047	1.07 (0.93 to 1.24)	0.96 (0.83 to 1.11)	0.96 (0.83 to 1.10)
Low	2272	1.11 (0.96 to 1.29)	0.96 (0.83 to 1.11)	0.94 (0.81 to 1.09)
Interactional Justice				
High	2227	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	2521	1.05 (0.91 to 1.22)	1.00 (0.86 to 1.15)	1.00 (0.86 to 1.15)
Low	2152	1.11 (0.96 to 1.29)	0.97 (0.83 to 1.13)	0.95 (0.82 to 1.11)

ERI, effort-reward imbalance; NA, negative affectivity; SEP, socio-economic position.

Table 3 Associations of procedural and interactional justice with heavy smoking (≥ 20 cigarettes per day) among current smokers: adjusted odds ratios and their 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs) from logistic regression models with generalized estimating equations

	No. of participants	Odds Ratio, (95% CI), Adjusted for—		
		Age (A)	A + education, SEP, marital status, job contract and NA (B)	B + job strain and ERI (C)
Women:		4666		
Procedural Justice				
High	1705	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	1458	1.06 (0.81 to 1.38)	1.03 (0.79 to 1.35)	1.01 (0.77 to 1.33)
Low	1503	1.44 (1.12 to 1.82)	1.34 (1.04 to 1.73)	1.32 (1.02 to 1.71)
Interactional Justice				
High	1617	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	1505	1.24 (0.96 to 1.60)	1.20 (0.93 to 1.56)	1.19 (0.92 to 1.53)
Low	1544	1.57 (1.22 to 2.02)	1.41 (1.09 to 1.83)	1.39 (1.06 to 1.81)

Men:	1629			
Procedural Justice				
High	571	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	495	1.22 (0.93 to 1.59)	1.01 (0.76 to 1.33)	1.03 (0.77 to 1.36)
Low	563	1.66 (1.23 to 2.17)	1.44 (1.09 to 1.90)	1.48 (1.10 to 2.00)
Interactional Justice				
High	502	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intermediate	595	0.97 (0.74 to 1.28)	0.90 (0.68 to 1.20)	0.92 (0.69 to 1.23)
Low	532	1.59 (1.22 to 2.07)	1.35 (1.03 to 1.77)	1.38 (1.03 to 1.83)

ERI, effort-reward imbalance; NA, negative affectivity; SEP, socio-economic position.

Finally, we tested the associations between organisational justice and ex-smoking among female and male ever smokers. However, no significant associations were found. (Data not shown.)

DISCUSSION

This study explored the extent to which the level of organisational justice was associated with smoking intensity in a large sample of Finnish public sector employees. According to our results, smokers who experienced lower justice at work in terms of decision-making procedures and interpersonal treatment were more likely to exhibit heavy smoking. This association was not accounted for by age, education, socio-economic position, marital status, job contract, negative affectivity (a proxy for response style) or clustering of the data. Furthermore, the contribution of procedural and interactional justice largely persisted after control for the two leading models of work stress, the models job strain and effort-reward imbalance. This suggests that organisational justice is not just a marker for other work-related psychosocial factors that might influence smoking intensity.

Earlier studies on work-related psychosocial factors and smoking mainly relate to the models of job strain and effort-reward imbalance. Research on organisational justice is very recent compared with research published on these established models. It is possible that there is some overlap between some items of organisational justice and job control measures as well as

between organisational justice and rewards measures. For example, consideration of subordinates' viewpoint partly overlaps with job control (participation in decision making). In our data, relatively weak correlations (0.16 to 0.20, $p < 0.001$ in all cases) were observed between the job control scale and the three items in the procedural justice scale referring to making or challenging decisions. In addition, both dimensions of organisational justice were only moderately correlated with job strain and ERI. The correlations ranged from -0.25 to -0.29 ($p < 0.001$ in all cases).

Conditions of low control and low organisational justice can occur simultaneously in the same work environment.[37] This was also the case in the present study, as 44% of participants with high job strain and 45% of participants with high ERI also were in the lowest tertile of procedural justice. Considering this co-occurrence, it is possible that adjustments for these models represent overcontrolling. On the other hand, error in the measurement of these concepts increases risk of insufficient adjustment and residual confounding. However, such error is also likely to lead underestimation of the association between justice and smoking intensity.

Conceptually, the main focus of the job strain model is on the task level characteristics while the model of organisational justice emphasises work-related social contexts and processes.[12] In other words, job demands, job control, and social support deal with the person's job characteristics or situations in which the employee needs help, whereas the dimensions of

organisational justice may capture more basic elements of the social structure in which these characteristics are operating.[12][38][39]

The model of organisational justice also differs from the ERI model. The justice model is not limited to the specific exchange process between efforts and rewards but it aims to capture the whole range of unjust treatment at work experienced or witnessed by employees.[12]

We hypothesise that organisational injustice is one type of psychosocial job stressor, which affects psychological, physical and behavioural reactions.[13] Because we found that organisational justice was associated with smoking independently of job strain and ERI, we see it as a distinctive type of job stressor. In line with that, we assume that these three models are complementary capturing partly different stressors that independently affect smoking behaviour. This view is also supported by studies on other outcomes, such as psychiatric disorders,[40] self-rated health,[12] and coronary heart disease.[11]

No evidence was found to support the hypothesis that organisational justice would be associated with smoking status. This may be partly because smoking is usually initiated before adulthood and is maintained by a wide range cultural and social factors.[24] On the other hand, smoking intensity can vary during adulthood. It seems likely that workplace factors such as organisational justice might influence in particular the number of cigarettes smoked rather than the smoking status. In fact, there is also more evidence

for an association between job strain and smoking intensity than for job strain and smoking status.[28]

The present results indicate that some smokers may use heavy smoking as a means of coping for injustice they experience at their workplaces. However, this is probably not the case for all smokers as there are individual differences in the mode or pattern of behavioural responses to adverse psychosocial factors,[41] such as low organisational justice. The neutralising effect of variables going in different directions for different people can lead to the overall finding of no relationship or only a weak relationship between organisational justice and smoking habits.

Strengths and weaknesses of the study

This study had several strengths. First, to our best knowledge, this was the first study focussing on the association between organisational justice and smoking. Second, information came from a large survey with a satisfactory response rate and the respondents represented the target population well in terms of age, sex, and socio-economic position. This limited the potential for selection bias. Third, although the sample was not truly representative of Finnish working population, it represented a fairly heterogeneous group of workers. Fourth, the present data included measurements of major work-related psychosocial factors, such as job strain and ERI. This enabled us to determine whether the addition of justice would add to risk estimates based on established psychosocial risk factors. Fifth, several potential confounders

were adjusted for. A major bias in our study is unlikely. Although not very large, the size of the effect was comparable and the results were in line with those obtained for the established psychosocial factors, such as job control,[28] job strain,[21][22][28] and ERI.[28][29]

The main limitations when interpreting these findings need also to be addressed. First, the observational and cross-sectional design of this investigation does not permit conclusions of the causal relationships. Heavy smoking may predate the experience of low justice. For example, heavy smokers may take several cigarette breaks during the working day and if their supervisor does not see it acceptable, these workers may find their treatment unjust. Moreover, both heavy smoking and low organisational justice can be caused by some underlying third factors.

Second, this study assessed organisational justice and smoking with self-reports, which can cause recall and response bias. As justice was self-reported, it is unclear whether actual managerial and interpersonal treatment or the characteristics of the respondent determined the level of justice. Self-report data on substance use can be subject to underreporting. Besides, common method variance may artificially inflate relationships between variables and may bias the results concerning bivariate associations in cross-sectional data.[42]

Third, although we performed multiple adjustments, it is still possible that some other factors may lie behind the observed associations. We cannot

totally rule out the possibility that heavy smokers have been selected into less just job conditions by virtue of personality or poor health. Moreover, home stress, individual coping strategies, job-related smoking opportunities, smoking behaviours of fellow employees, and workplace norms or policy might modify the relationships. For example, applications of smoking restrictions may have slightly varied between different workplaces. There is evidence showing an association between workplace smoking restriction policy and employees' smoking behaviour.[43] Further research needs to be conducted to test whether these or other potential confounders might be responsible for the association.

Fourth, the standard measure of ERI was not available in this study.

However, both studies using original and proxy measures have found support for the ERI model, indicating an effect of ERI regardless of the measure.[44]

A previous report of this study cohort showed an association between high ERI and higher smoking intensity,[28] and this can be seen as an indication of the predictive validity of our ERI measure. In spite of this, there is a possibility that our crude measure did not fully capture the ERI model and the Cronbach alpha for the rewards scale was rather moderate.

Finally, our evidence was based on female-dominated hospital and municipal sector. Further studies in prospective design, in other countries and in private sector are needed to confirm and develop our findings as well as determine their generalizability.

Practical implications

Because the pursuit of justice is a fundamental aspect of any social organisation,[39] it would be important to pay attention to decision procedures and interpersonal treatment at workplace. Just treatment by important group members leads to positive feelings and is associated with the perceived quality of social relationships between individuals and decision-makers.[45][46] Moreover, this study together with earlier evidence indicates that improving organisational justice at workplace might have a favourable effect on employee health and it should perhaps be among the important factors in attempts to minimise psychosocial risk at work.

The workplace may be a potentially feasible area for health promotion and interventions. This study provides information that could be used to plan worksite health promotion strategies. Our findings suggest that decision-making procedures and interpersonal treatment of employees might be among the factors to focus on in attempts to cut smoking. Other studies suggest that changes in justice may also reduce levels of sickness absence and risk of health problems.[12][13]

Conclusion

This is apparently the first study to show that the extent of procedural and interactional justice in the workplace is associated with the intensity of

smoking among current smokers. The contribution of organisational justice to heavy smoking was not attributable to relations between other major work-related psychosocial factors and smoking. This indicates that the organisational justice model might provide supplementary information on important stressors in the psychosocial work environment in general and on potential work-related determinants of heavy smoking in particular. The findings reported here shed some light on the potential mechanisms underlying the association between low organisational justice and ill health found in previous studies.

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS SUBJECT

Previous studies on psychosocial work-related factors and smoking have been focused on job strain and effort-reward imbalance (ERI), but the relationship between organisational justice and smoking has been poorly described. In this study, we examined the extent to which justice of decision-making procedures and interpersonal relations at work is associated with smoking status and heavy smoking.

WHAT THIS PAPER ADDS

Justice of decision-making procedures and of interpersonal treatment by supervisors was associated with heavy smoking among current smokers, independently of established occupational stressors such as job strain and ERI. The findings reported here shed some light on the potential mechanisms underlying the association between low organisational justice and ill health.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Decision-making procedures and interpersonal treatment of employees might be among the factors to focus on in attempts to cut smoking.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was supported by grants from the Academy of Finland (projects 104891 and 105195), the Finnish Work Environment Fund (project 103432), the Finnish Association for Promotion of Occupational Health (AK), and the participating towns and hospitals.

Competing interests: none declared

REFERENCES

- [1] **Moorman RH**. Relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviors: Do fairness perception influence employee citizenship? *J Appl Psychol* 1991;**76**:845-55.
- [2] **Cropanzano R**, Byrne ZS, Bobocel RD, *et al*. Moral virtues, fairness heuristics, social entities, and other denizens of organizational justice. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 2001;**91**:164-209.
- [3] **Leventhal GS**. What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In: Gergen KS, Greenberg MS, Willis RH, eds. *Social exchange: Advances in theory and research*. New York: Plenum, 1980:27-55.
- [4] **Bies RJ**, Moag JS. Interactional justice: communication criteria for fairness. In: Lewicki RJ, Sheppard BH, Bazerman MZ, eds., *Research on negotiations in organizations*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1986:43-55.
- [5] **Tyler TR**, Lind EA. A relational model of authority in groups. In: Zanna MP, ed. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 25. San Diego: Academic Press, 1992:115-91.
- [6] Konovsky MA. Understanding procedural justice and its impact on business organizations. *Journal of Management* 2000;**26**:489–511.
- [7] Lind E A, Tyler TR. *The social psychology of procedural justice*. New York: Plenum University Press, 1988.

- [8] **Fehr E**, Fischbacher U. The nature of human altruism. *Nature* 2003;**425**:785-91.
- [9] **Johnson DDP**, Stopka P, Knights S. The puzzle of human cooperation. *Nature* 2003;**421**:911–12.
- [10] **Marmot M**. *Status Syndrome: How Your Social Standing Directly Affects Your Health and Life Expectancy*. London, England: Bloombury, 2004.
- [11] **Kivimäki M**, Ferrie JE, Brunner E, *et al*. Justice at work and reduced risk of coronary heart disease among employees: the Whitehall II Study. *Arch Intern Med* 2005;**165**:2245-51.
- [12] **Kivimäki M**, Ferrie JE, Head J, *et al*. Organisational justice and change in justice as predictors of employee health: the Whitehall II study. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2004;**58**:931-37.
- [13] **Elovainio M**, Kivimäki M, Vahtera J. Organizational justice: Evidence of a new psychosocial predictor of health. *Am J Public Health* 2002;**92**:105-8.
- [14] **Kivimäki M**, Elovainio M, Vahtera J, *et al*. Organisational justice and health of employees: prospective cohort study. *Occup Environ Med* 2003;**60**:27-34.
- [15] **Elovainio M**, Leino-Arjas P, Vahtera J, *et al*. Justice at work and cardiovascular mortality: a prospective cohort study. *J Psychosom Res* 2006. In press.
- [16] **Brunner E**, Marmot M. Social organisation, stress, and health. In: Marmot

- M, Wilkinson RG, eds., *Social determinants of health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999:17-43.
- [17] **Karasek R**. Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Adm Sci Q* 1979;**24**:285-308.
- [18] **Karasek RA**, Theorell T. *Healthy work: stress, productivity and the reconstruction of working life*. New York: Basic Books Inc. Publ., 1990.
- [19] **Siegrist J**. Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions. *J Occup Health Psychol* 1996;**1**:27-41.
- [20] **Green KL**, Johnson JV. The effects of psychosocial work organization on patterns of cigarette smoking among male chemical plant employees. *Am J Public Health* 1990;**80**:1368-71.
- [21] **Hellerstedt WL**, Jeffery RW. The association of job strain and health behaviours in men and women. *Int J Epidemiol* 1997;**26**:575-83.
- [22] **Kawakami N**, Haratani T, Araki S. Job strain and arterial blood pressure, serum cholesterol, and smoking as risk factors for coronary heart disease in Japan. *Int Arch Occup Environ Health* 1998;**71**:429-32.
- [23] **Reed DW**, LaCroix AZ, Karasek RA, *et al*. Occupational strain and the incidence of coronary heart disease. *Am J Epidemiol* 1989;**129**:495-502.
- [24] **Landsbergis PA**, Schnall PL, Deitz DK, *et al*. Job strain and health behaviors: results of a prospective study. *Am J Health Promot* 1998;**12**:237-45.
- [25] **Otten F**, Bosma H, Swinkels H. Job stress and smoking in the Dutch labour force. *Eur J Public Health* 1999;**9**:58-61.

- [26] **Loon van AJM**, Tijhuis M, Surtees PG, *et al.* Lifestyle risk factors for cancer: the relationship with psychosocial work environment. *Int J Epidemiol* 2000;**29**:785-92.
- [27] **Tsutsumi A**, Kayaba K, Yoshimura M, *et al.* Association between job characteristics and health behaviors in Japanese rural workers. *Int J Behav Med* 2003;**10**:125-42.
- [28] **Kouvonen A**, Kivimäki M, Virtanen M, *et al.* Work stress, smoking status and smoking intensity: an observational study of 46 190 employees. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2005;**59**:63-9.
- [29] **Peter R.** Job stressors, coping characteristics, and the development of coronary heart disease (CHD): Results from two studies. *Psychologische-Beitrage* 1995;**37**:40-5.
- [30] **Kivimäki M**, Lawlor DA, Davey Smith G, *et al.* Socioeconomic position, co-occurrence of behavior-related risk factors, and coronary heart disease: The Finnish Public Sector Study. *American Journal of Public Health*, in press.
- [31] **Ala-Mursula L**, Vahtera J, Linna A, *et al.* Employee worktime control moderates the effects of job strain and effort-reward imbalance on sickness absence: the 10-Town study. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2005;**59**:851-7.
- [32] **Spielberger CD**, Gorsuch RL, Lushene R, *et al.* *Manual for the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (form Y)*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press Inc., 1983.

- [33] **Karasek R.** *Job content questionnaire and user's guide*. Revision 1.1. Los Angeles, CA: Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, University of Southern Los Angeles, 1985.
- [34] **Karasek R**, Brisson C, Kawakami N, *et al.* The job content questionnaire (JCQ): an instrument for internationally comparative assessments of psychological job characteristics. *J Occupat Health Psychol* 1998;**3**:322-55.
- [35] **Taris TW**, Kalimo R, Schaufeli WB. Inequity at work: its measurement and association with worker health. *Work Stress* 2002;**16**:287-301.
- [36] **Lipsitz SH**, Kim K, Zhao L. Analysis of repeated categorical data using generalized estimating equations. *Stat Med* 1994;**13**:1149-63.
- [37] **Elovainio M**, Kivimäki M, Helkama K. Organisational justice evaluations, job control, and occupational strain. *J Appl Psychol* 2001;**86**:418–24.
- [38] **van den Bos K**, Lind EA. Uncertainty management by means of fairness judgments. In: Zanna MP, ed. *Advances in experimental social psychology*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2002:1–60.
- [39] **Miller DT**. Disrespect and the experience of injustice. *Annu Rev Psychol* 2001;**52**:527-553.
- [40] **Ferrie JE**, Head J, Shipley MJ, *et al.* Injustice at work and incidence of psychiatric morbidity: the Whitehall II study. *Occup Environ Med* 2006;**63**:443-50
- [41] **Conway TL**, Ward HW, Vickers RR, *et al.* Occupational stress and variation in cigarette, coffee, and alcohol consumption. *J Health Soc Behav* 1981;**22**:155-65.

- [42] **McClelland GH**, Judd CM. Statistical difficulties of detecting interactions and moderator effects. *Psychol Bulletin* 1993;**2**:376-90.
- [43] **Fichtenberg CM**, Glantz SA. Effect of smoke-free workplaces on smoking behaviour: systematic review. *BMJ* 2002;**325**:188-91.
- [44] **van Vegchel N**, de Jonge J, Bosma H, *et al*. Reviewing the effort–reward imbalance model: drawing up the balance of 45 empirical studies. *Soc Sci Med* 2005;**60**:1117–31.
- [45] **Tyler TR**. Psychological models of the justice motive: The antecedents of distributive justice and procedural justice. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994;**67**:850–63.
- [46] **Tyler T**, DeGoey P, Smith H. Understanding why the justice of group procedures matters: a test of the psychological dynamics of the group-value model. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1996;**70**:913–30.