

# Working environment and health in the Norwegian fishing fleet – challenges and health promoting factors

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Unfavorable exposures for workers in the fishing fleet, such as a cold, noise, heavy lifting, inconvenient working hours, long work days and excessive strain are factors that may negatively affect health and work participation. Combinations of these exposures are often found on board fishing vessels. Moreover, workers on fishing vessels deal with constant and often unpredictable vessel movements, vibration and exposure to airborne particles of biologic origin (bioaerosols). There is a lack of knowledge about the interaction between work, working environment and working health in the fishing fleet.

The main objective of this project is to study the interaction between these factors in the Norwegian fishing fleet. We aim to provide knowledge about which work-related factors might affect health and work participation negatively, and which factors might promote good health, foster job satisfaction and participation in working life.

An interdisciplinary approach combining qualitative and quantitative perspectives will be applied to provide a deeper understanding of the questions at hand. The project is divided into five work packages (WP) and data will be drawn from several sources, including register studies, questionnaire surveys, interviews, field,- and laboratory studies. WP1 will determine the most widespread diagnoses for all Norwegian fishers by use of register data. In WP2 and 3 field studies will focus on association between workplace-related exposures and working health, such as exposure to organic materials during fish processing and associations with airway symptoms and allergies, exposure to low ambient temperatures and associations with symptoms from muscles and airways. The crew of 4-5 deep-sea fishing vessels (approximately 100 persons) will be included. WP4 focuses on self-reported health status, and a combination of interviews and a questionnaire study distributed to a representative selection of fishers in different parts of the Norwegian fishing fleet will be used. In WP5 an integrated analysis, combining data from all work packages will be performed. Results are expected to be of significant value to the prevention of occupational diseases and withdrawal from working life at sea, and provide implementation loci for health-promoting measures in the fishing fleet.

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