

## Press release

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### Basic information

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Department of: Clinical Medicine

Main supervisor: Johan Hviid Andersen

Title of dissertation: WORK-RELATED STRESS AND COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS:  
A LONGITUDINAL CLINICAL STUDY

Date for defence: 05.05.17 at (time of day): 13.00 Place: Palle Juul-Jensen Auditoriet, bygn. 10, Aarhus Universitetshospital, Nørrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C

Press release (Danish)

Ph.d.-forsvar 5. maj 2017: Hukommelses og koncentrationsproblemer ved arbejdsrelateret stress

Personer, som har følt sig alvorligt stressede igennem længere tid, oplever tit, at de står i supermarkedet og har glemt, hvad det var, de skulle købe. De glemmer børnenes madpakke, eller hvad det var de gik ud i køkkenet efter. Mange kan ikke koncentrere sig om at læse en ganske kort avisartikel.

Et nyt ph.d.-projekt fra Aarhus Universitet, Health, har undersøgt stresspatienter med både spørgeskemaer og neuropsykologiske tests - både når stressreaktionen var værst og et år senere. Undersøgelsen blev gennemført for at kunne give et svar på, om stress reelt påvirker koncentration og hukommelse, eller om det måske i højere grad handler om, at stresspatienten har for mange ting om ørerne eller er for opmærksom på disse problemer. Ph.d.-projektet forsøger også at give et svar på, om man får sin koncentration og hukommelse helt tilbage igen, når man ikke længere er stresset.

I undersøgelsen, som blev gennemført af Anita Eskildsen og var finansieret af Arbejdsmiljøforskningsfonden, indgik 119 mennesker, heraf 60 tidlige patienter med langvarig arbejdsrelateret stress og 59 raske kontrolpersoner.

Resultaterne fra undersøgelsen viser, at stresspatienterne faktisk klarede sig dårligere end kontrolgruppen på en række kognitive test. Derudover viser det sig, at selvom patienterne forbedrede sig henover et år, nåede de ikke op på samme niveau som kontrolgruppen.

Resultaterne er offentliggjort i følgende tre artikler: Eskildsen et al. (2015). 1) Work-related stress is associated with impaired neuropsychological test performance: A clinical cross-sectional study. *Stress The International Journal on the Biology of Stress*, 18:2, 198-207; 2) Eskildsen et al. (2015). Cross-cultural adaptation and validation of the Danish consensus version of the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 2015;41(5):486-490; 3) Eskildsen et al. (2016). Cognitive Impairments in former patients with work-related stress complaints – One year later. *Stress The International Journal on the Biology of Stress*, 19:6, 559-566

Forsvaret af ph.d.-projektet er offentligt og finder sted den 5. maj 2017 klokken 13-15. Det foregår i Palle Juul-Jensen Auditoriet, bygning 10, Aarhus Universitetshospital, Nørrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C.

Ph.d.-afhandlingens titel: "Work-related stress and cognitive impairments: A longitudinal clinical study". Selve præsentationen foregår på dansk.

Kontakt: Psykolog og ph.d.-studerende Anita Eskildsen: [anita.eskildsen@vest.rm.dk](mailto:anita.eskildsen@vest.rm.dk) og 7843 3500

Press release (English)

PhD defence 5. May 2017: Work-related stress and cognitive impairments:  
A longitudinal clinical study

Individuals suffering from work-related stress often find themselves forgetting what to buy in the supermarket. Often they also have difficulties concentrating when reading the newspaper.

A new PhD project from Aarhus University, Health, has examined patients with work-related stress using both questionnaires and neuropsychological tests. The tests were completed when the patients were first referred to treatment and again after one year.

The aim of the study was to answer the question of whether work-related stress is associated with real cognitive impairments, or if it is more likely that the complaints of stress patients are the result of too many assignments or an increased awareness of memory failures. The PhD project also aims towards examining if the patients recover in respect to memory and concentration.

The study which was completed by Anita Eskildsen and financed by The Danish Working Environment Research Fund included 119 individuals - 59 patients and 60 controls.

The results indicate that the stress patients generally showed mildly reduced performance on the neuropsychological tests, and that they continued to perform inferior to the controls after one year, even though they did improve somewhat.

The results are published in the following three papers: Eskildsen et al. (2015). 1) Work-related stress is associated with impaired neuropsychological test performance: A clinical cross-sectional study. *Stress The International Journal on the Biology of Stress*, 18:2, 198-207; 2) Eskildsen et al. (2015). Cross-cultural adaptation and validation of the Danish consensus version of the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale. *Scand J Work Environ Health* 2015;41(5):486-490; 3) Eskildsen et al. (2016). Cognitive Impairments in former patients with work-related stress complaints – One year later. *Stress The International Journal on the Biology of Stress*, 19:6, 559-566

The defence is public and takes place on May 5 2017 13-15 in Palle Juul-Jensen Auditoriet, building 10, Aarhus University Hospital, Nørrebrogade 44, 8000 Aarhus C..

For more information, please contact PhD student Anita Eskildsen: [anita.eskildsen@vest.rm.dk](mailto:anita.eskildsen@vest.rm.dk), phone +45 7843 3500

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