

Women take almost 50 percent more short-term sick leave than men

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Women take almost 50% more short term sick leave than men, finds research published ahead of print in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*. But they don't take more long term sick leave, the findings show.

The researchers assessed periods of sick leave among almost 7000 municipal workers in Helsinki, Finland, between 2002 and 2005.

The employees, who were all aged between 40 and 60, were also quizzed about their working lives and general health.

Physical health problems, physical work demands, and work fatigue were more commonly reported by women. And they were 46% more likely than men to call in sick for short periods of a few days (self certified sick leave).

They were also a third more likely to take short term sick leave, certified by a doctor.

But diagnosed illness explained only about a third of the difference in spells of self certified sick leave and about half of that certified by a doctor.

Women may be better at recognising problems and going to the doctor for treatment, suggest the authors.

The gender differences in sick leave gradually weakened for periods longer than two weeks. And when it came to periods of 60 days or more, there was little difference between men and women.

Source: British Medical Journal

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