Sustainable working life in human service work

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Objectives
The aim of the poster is to present the background of an ongoing comparative study of Danish and Swedish general dental practitioners. Dental work is an example of human service work, which involves cognitively, emotionally and technically demanding tasks, which potentially may implicate negative as well as positive personal effects. By measuring positive effects, resources and rewards of dental work, the overall aim is to identify conditions promoting a sustainable working life in human service organizations.

Results
After two reminders, the total response rate was 68% (n=1226). Of the respondents, 62% were women, 38% men, 51% were Swedes and 49% Danes. As to three core items, frequency analysis showed that almost three fourths of the dentists experienced a high or a very high degree of (1) work enjoyment (73%), (2) of satisfaction with their work as a whole (72%) and (3) of a good working life (74%). The items (1) and (2) showed significant differences between the groups of Danes/Swedes, of private/ public and of leader/employee (p ≤ 0.05). Item (3) showed similar results, except for the comparison Danes/Swedes (p =0.054).

Conclusions
The initial results corroborate that Danish and Swedish dentists are good examples of persons with positive perceptions of human service work. The significant differences between the groups are to be further analyzed to track potential correlations to factors of a sustainable working life.

Materials and methods
In 2008, a questionnaire, previously tested in a pilot, was sent to a randomly selected sample of 1835 practicing dentists in Sweden and Denmark. Perceptions of e.g., work enjoyment, satisfaction, relationships, or organizational conditions, work-life balance and considerations of future work were covered. Distribution analysis and Mann-Whitney U test were used for comparison between groups.

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