

# Contingent self-esteem, stressors and burnout in working women and men

Victoria Blom

*Department of Psychology, Stockholm University, SE 106 91 Stockholm, Sweden*

*Tel.: +46 8 16 38 20; Fax: +46 8 15 93 42; E-mail: victoria.blom@psychology.su.se*

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**Abstract.** *Objective:* A high work involvement is considered central in the burnout process. Yet, research investigating how high work involvement and psychosocial stressors relate to burnout is scarce. High involvement in terms of performance-based self-esteem (PBSE) refers to individuals' strivings to validate self-worth by achievements, a disposition linked to poor health. The aim of the present study was to examine longitudinally PBSE in relation to burnout while also taking into account work- and private life stressors.

*Participants:* The sample consisted of 2121 working women and men.

*Methods:* Main- and mediation effects were investigated using hierarchical regression analysis.

*Results:* The results showed performance-based self-esteem mediated partially between the stressors and burnout. Performance-based self-esteem was the strongest predictor of burnout over time, followed by private life stressors. Women experienced more work stress than did men. Men had stronger associations between work stressors and burnout, while women had stronger associations between performance-based self-esteem and burnout.

*Conclusions:* Individual characteristics along with both private life and work stressors are important predictors of burnout. Factors associated with burnout differ somewhat between women and men.

**Keywords:** Gender, mediation, performance-based self-esteem

## 1. Introduction

Work life is currently characterized by unclear borders between work and non-work. Increased responsibility is placed on employees concerning where, when, and how to carry out the work. As a consequence, characteristics of the individual take on added importance in trying to decide who will benefit or who will suffer from the changed conditions of work [1]. Such characteristics include contingent self-esteem, which has been associated with stress-related ill-health in general and with burnout in particular [2–10].

Contingent self-esteem refers to a self-worth dependent on perceived successes or failures in the domain in which an individual's self-esteem is staked [3]. A particularly vulnerable self-worth [3] labelled performance-based self-esteem [4] or competence based self-

esteem [5] is dependent on competence and achievements. This predisposes individuals to invest a lot of effort into their work in order to validate their self-worth through achievements [3–7], and has been found detrimental to physical and mental health [2,3,8], associated to sickness presenteeism [9] and linked to burnout [4, 10].

Burnout can be defined as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding [11]. Several researchers have suggested that high work involvement and inner demands to perform well contribute to burnout [12–16], but few studies have focused on this involvement to identify those at risk for burnout. However, according to recent research contingent self-esteem dependent on achievements is of importance for burnout, suggesting that the exhaustive

state in burnout results from an individual's conviction that her or his self-value is dependent on good performances [4,6,10].

The vulnerability of contingent self-esteem arises from a low basic sense of self-esteem compensated by chronic pursuits to achieve and a constant need to prove one's worth to sustain self-esteem [5,7]. This constitutes a highly unstable self-esteem, fluctuating with mistakes and successes. Unstable self-esteem is strongly associated with ill-health [17], and the obsessive avoidance of mistakes creates a behaviour pattern involving self-criticism, perfectionism and strong control needs [5,7]. Further, in their incessant striving for self-worth, individuals with a contingent self-esteem have difficulties limiting their own workload and so often exceed their physical and mental limits [4–8,18–20]. The individuals' vulnerability to stress has to do with this compulsive behaviour pattern.

In the present study, performance-based self-esteem was considered to refer to the initial work involvement linked to burnout. It was thought to be triggered by dysfunctional work conditions and to have an indirect mediating role in the relationship between contextual stressors and burnout. This mediating assumption was based on research within the Job Demands-Resources model [21] and the Self-Determination theory [22]. Studies within the Job Demands-Resources model have shown job resources predict a higher positive work engagement [23]. Other studies have found need satisfaction through competence mediate between job resources and exhaustion [24]. Conversely, in their model of self and motivation, Ryan and Deci [22] have argued that a controlling environment catalyzes an individual's dysfunctional motivation meaning the performance is driven by an ambition to increase one's own self-value rather than by the pure satisfaction of dealing with a particular task. In line with this, Crocker and Park [3] have stated the experience of being devalued in an environment of scarcity, competition or evaluative focus is a powerful trigger of maladaptive self-esteem pursuits, in particular for women. In the present study, stressors such as support from supervisor and peer groups, scarce resources, conflicting demands and workload were investigated as potential triggers of the disposition of performance-based self-esteem.

Most research on the antecedents of burnout has concerned either contextual stressors or individual characteristics [25]. The present study set out to examine the joint effects of work- and private life stressors and the individual's chronic pursuits of contingent self-esteem on burnout. This was investigated with longitudinal

data in a large sample of working women and men. Gender was a focus in the study because women are found to have higher performance-based self-esteem than men [4]. Also, women and men's work situation has been found to differ according to status, salary, development opportunities and decision latitude [26]. Consequently, separate analyses were performed for men and women.

The objectives of the present study were to investigate the role of performance-based self-esteem (PBSE) in the burnout process over time, and to examine how it relates to work- and private life stressors in working women and men. The stressors and performance-based self-esteem were taken from the first data collection in time 1 (T1) and the burnout measure from the second data collection in time 2 (T2). The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Performance based self esteem relates *directly* and positively to burnout, individuals with high PBSE in T1 have high burnout in T2.
2. Work- and private life stressors relate *directly* and positively to burnout, negatively perceived stressors in T1 are associated to high burnout in T2.
3. The relationship between stressors and burnout is *mediated* by performance-based self-esteem, a negatively perceived stressor in T1 is associated with high PBSE in T1 and with high burnout in T2.
4. There are *gender differences* in these associations as well as in level of PBSE and burnout:
  - a) Based on T1 ratings, women are hypothesized to have higher PBSE and burnout than men
  - b) Both PBSE and stressors are hypothesized to have a higher predictive strength to burnout for women
  - c) PBSE is hypothesized to mediate between more stressors and burnout in women than in men

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

The total study group consisted of a representative population sample based on a questionnaire supplementing Sweden's series of regular labour-market surveys [4]. Data were collected on two separate occasions. The first questionnaire was administered in the late autumn of 2000 (T1), and 4878 individuals took

part in the study, giving a response rate of 69.1%. On follow-up during the autumn of 2001 (T2), the questionnaire was sent to the individuals who had responded to the first questionnaire. At follow-up, 4318 individuals responded, resulting in a response rate of 86%. The current study was restricted to those individuals who were, on both measurement occasions, in permanent employment and within the age range of 20 to 65 years ( $M = 40$ ,  $SD = 13.6$ ). The final study group comprised 2121 participants of which 1130 were women and 991 were men. Listwise deletion was used for missing values of the selected variables.

## 2.2. Measures

*Performance-based self-esteem (PBSE)* was assessed using a four-item scale developed by Hallsten et al. [4], which has been validated [2,4,9,10] and found to have good psychometric properties [4]. The items were: 1) "I think that I sometimes try to prove my worth through my work", 2) "My self-esteem is far too dependent on my work achievements", 3) "At times, I have to be better than others to be good enough myself", and 4) "Occasionally I feel obsessed to accomplish something of value through my work". For all items, respondents were asked to indicate their answers along a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Cronbach's alpha in the present study was 0.80.

*Work- and private life stressors* covered work conditions (e.g., resources for good performance at work, conflicting demands, and supervisor support) and private life variables (e.g. energy consuming domestic tasks and peer social support). The stressors were formulated as questions (e.g. "Do you have enough resources to do a good job?") with a four point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always" or as statements (e.g. "I have home demands that require all my energy.") with a four point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". All variables were coded so higher values on all variables indicate a more negatively perceived stressor.

*Burnout* was measured with Pines Burnout Measure [27]. This measure is context free and can be used independently of an individual's occupational position. It consists of 21 items mainly indicating emotions and opinions described by adjectives such as "emotionally exhausted", "tired", "empty inside" and "energetic". These items were answered on a seven point scale ranging from "never" to "always". Pines Burnout Measure has been found to have good internal consistency, high

construct validity and correlates strongly with the exhaustion dimension in the Maslach Burnout Inventory [28]. In the present study the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.84.

*Control variables and gender specific analyses.* In order to rule out alternative explanations, the demographic variables age, marital status (married, cohabiting or single), and education level coded from 1 (less than nine years of school) to 7 (doctorate degree) were included in the analyses. These were selected on the basis of previous research showing that both PBSE and burnout is more common among young, single individuals with higher education [4,14]. In Sweden, performance-based self-esteem has been more common in women than in men [4] and some studies [14] show women are at a higher risk of burnout; therefore, women and men were analysed separately in order to detail gender specific patterns. As a consequence, branch of industry (coded 1–95) was important to include as an additional control variable because the labour market in Sweden, as in other countries, is highly gender separated with women working in the governmental and service sector [29].

## 2.3. Analyses

The direct effect of PBSE and stressors on burnout, and mediation analyses (hypotheses 1–3) were tested using hierarchical regression analysis. The criteria for mediation according to Baron and Kenny [30] were followed. All criteria were fulfilled, except for one private life stressor (significance for other individuals) which failed to significantly predict PBSE for men. Consequently, this stressor was not included in the mediation analyses for men. To investigate mediation, the control variables were entered in the first step of the hierarchical regression analyses and the stressor in the second. PBSE was added in the third step to investigate whether this mediator contributed to a decrease in the regression coefficient of the stressor. If the coefficient was no longer significant, a full mediation of PBSE in the relationship between the stressor and burnout was assumed. If there was a decrease in the coefficient from step 2 to 3 but the coefficient was still significant, Sobel's test [31] was performed to assess the extent to which PBSE carried the effect of the stressor on burnout. Due to the large sample size, the power problems associated with Sobel's test were considered small. The control variables, stressors, and PBSE were taken from the first data collection in time 1 (T1) and the burnout measure from the second data collection in

time 2 (T2). An alternative model with stressors as mediating variables and PBSE as the independent variable was tested by following the procedure for mediation. The hypothesized gender differences in hypothesis four were analysed with MANCOVA including all variables and the control variables as covariates as well as with gender separated regression analyses to examine gender specific patterns.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for all variables in the full sample at T1. Both PBSE and burnout correlated ( $r_p$ ) significantly with all stressors. The correlations between the different stressors were small to moderate. The control variables of age and education were not significantly correlated with burnout ( $p > 0.05$ ). Marriage status and branch of industry did not correlate significantly with PBSE ( $p > 0.05$ ). The mean value of PBSE at T1 was 2.71 and at T2 2.69, and the mean value for burnout at T1 was 2.91 and at T2 2.89. A paired samples t-test showed that the mean value difference between T1 and T2 in PBSE and T1 and T2 in burnout was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

#### 3.2. Direct effect of performance based self esteem on burnout

Hierarchical regression analyses with control variables entered in step 1 and PBSE in step 2 showed that PBSE predicted burnout significantly over time ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) so that individuals with high PBSE at T1 had higher burnout at T2. This applied for both women and men but the association was somewhat stronger for women (Women:  $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Men:  $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). PBSE at T1 explained 17% of the variance in burnout in T2 for women and 12% for men. As shown in Table 2, PBSE, as included in step 3, increased the explained variance of burnout significantly. Control variables, stressors, and PBSE together explained 16–20% of the variance of burnout at T2. Specifically, PBSE increased the explained variance with  $M = 14\%$  for women and  $M = 9.6\%$  for men. The relationship between PBSE and burnout was reciprocal with PBSE at T1 significantly predicting burnout at T2 ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and burnout at T1 significantly predicting PBSE at T2 ( $\beta = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

#### 3.3. Direct effects of work- and private life stressors on burnout

As shown in Table 2, in the second step in the hierarchical regression analyses, all stressors included in the study were significantly associated with burnout over time. The private life stressors ‘Significance for other individuals’ and ‘Peer social support’ emerged in the second step as the strongest predictors of burnout over time. The stressors explained between 1% (opportunities to decide work pace) to 16% (significance for other individuals) of the variance in burnout. The pattern was similar for men and women, but the associations between most of the work stressors and burnout (indicated by a higher standardized beta coefficients) seemed stronger for men than for women. Not having enough resources, conflicting demands, and few opportunities to decide work pace seemed to be more important for men while overtime work resulted in higher levels of burnout in T2 in women. However, for both women and men, feelings of not being significant and poor peer social support appeared as the strongest predictors of burnout.

#### 3.4. Mediating role of performance-based self-esteem in the relationship between stressors and burnout

As indicated in Table 2, PBSE was a full mediator only in the relationship between workload and burnout in women and between overtime work and burnout in men. These stressors were not significant in the third step, although in the latter case from a low coefficient level. Sobel’s test suggested the subsequent drop in regression weights from step 2 to step 3, when adding PBSE, was substantial for all other stressors. This indicates that PBSE partially mediate between these stressors and burnout. Besides the difference in PBSE fully mediating between workload and burnout in women respectively overtime and burnout in men, there were no clear gender specific patterns in the mediating effect of PBSE between stressors and burnout.

An alternative model, using PBSE as an independent variable and the stressors as mediating variables, was tested with hierarchical regression analysis but these results (not shown) did not fulfill the criteria for partial nor full mediation.

#### 3.5. Gender differences in PBSE, burnout and stressors

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANCOVA) with the covariates education, age, civil status and

Table 1  
Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients between PBSE, burnout, control variables and stressors (*n* = 2124)

	M	Sd	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 PBSE	2.71	1.10	1															
2 Burnout	2.91	0.88	0.44**	1														
3 Age	43.13	10.58	-0.11**	0.01	1													
4 Education	3.84	1.48	0.15**	0.04	0.11**	1												
5 Marriage status	1.69	0.82	0.03	0.08*	0.29**	-0.05	1											
6 Branch	60.84	24.42	0.03	0.06*	0.09**	0.26**	-0.04	1										
7 Low quality	1.89	0.57	0.14**	0.25**	0.03	0.16**	0.02	0.09**	1									
8 Low support	2.39	0.97	0.07*	0.22**	0.10**	-0.02	-0.05*	-0.05*	0.29**	1								
9 Few resources	1.99	0.66	0.15**	0.26**	0.01	0.12**	0.01	0.07**	0.54**	0.33**	1							
10 Overtime work	2.48	1.46	0.23**	0.15**	0.09**	0.28**	0.00	0.03	0.16**	0.09**	0.19**	1						
11 Conflicting demands	2.15	1.50	0.21**	0.25**	0.04	0.09*	0.01	0.07*	0.12**	0.19**	0.25**	0.36**	1					
12 Work load	2.26	1.58	0.22**	0.22**	-0.02	0.18**	0.02	0.07*	0.13**	0.16**	0.24**	0.66**	0.55**	1				
13 Work pace	3.09	1.77	0.09**	0.20**	0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.13**	0.24**	0.20**	0.29**	0.06*	0.12**	0.09**	1			
14 Home work load	2.17	0.93	0.14**	0.15**	-0.15	0.05*	-0.10**	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.06*	1		
15 Significance for others	2.39	0.85	0.08*	0.42**	0.02	-0.14**	0.12**	0.21**	0.12**	0.20**	0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.07	0.01	-0.04	1	
16 Social support	1.68	0.92	0.25**	0.48**	-0.14**	0.07*	0.11**	0.11**	0.12**	0.12**	0.11**	0.15**	0.07*	0.12**	0.06	0.12**	0.26**	1

\* significant at 0.01-level.  
\*\* significant at 0.001-level.

Table 2

Results of separate hierarchical regression analyses for women and men. Standardized regression coefficients (and z-value for Sobel's test).  $N = 2121$  (men = 991, women = 1130). Burnout at T2 and PBSE, stressors and control variables at T1.  $\Delta R^2$  refers to the added explained variance of burnout by each stressor and PBSE

	Women				Men			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3 (Sobel)	$\Delta R^2$	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3 (Sobel)	$\Delta R^2$
Age	0.01	0.00	0.04		0.04	0.05*	0.01	
Education level	0.02	0.01	0.06*		0.01	0.02	0.05*	
Married/single	0.11**	0.11**	0.11**		0.09**	0.10**	0.09**	
Branch of industry	0.01	0.01	0.04		0.01	0.02	0.02	
Low quality satisfaction		0.24**	0.19** (4.17**)	0.05**		0.20**	0.17** (2.43*)	0.04**
PBSE			0.39**	0.14**			0.33**	0.10**
Low supervisor support		0.20**	0.17** (2.71*)	0.04**		0.19**	0.16** (2.92*)	0.04**
PBSE			0.40**	0.15**			0.33**	0.11**
Not enough resources		0.17**	0.12** (3.88**)	0.03*		0.27**	0.21** (5.07**)	0.07**
PBSE			0.40**	0.15**			0.30**	0.09*
Overtime work		0.15**	0.08* (5.91**)	0.03*		0.07*	0.00ns	0.01
PBSE			0.40**	0.15**			0.34**	0.11**
Conflicting demands		0.18**	0.10 (4.49**)	0.02*		0.32**	0.25** (5.48**)	0.09**
PBSE			0.40**	0.14**			0.28**	0.07**
Work load at work		0.14**	0.07ns	0.02*		0.19**	0.12** (7.19**)	0.06**
PBSE			0.40**	0.15**			0.32**	0.09**
Low opp decide work pace		0.12**	0.09* (2.95*)	0.01		0.21**	0.17** (2.85*)	0.04**
PBSE			0.41**	0.15**			0.32**	0.10**
Home work load		0.14**	0.09* (3.42**)	0.02*		0.18**	0.14** (3.38**)	0.03*
PBSE			0.40**	0.15**			0.33**	0.10**
Low significance for others		0.41**	0.34** (4.02**)	0.16**		0.37**	Not fulfilled	0.13**
PBSE			0.39**	0.12**			0.34**	0.12**
Low peer social support		0.41**	0.32** (6.72**)	0.15**		0.39**	0.34** (5.10**)	0.15**
PBSE			0.33**	0.10**			0.27**	0.07**

\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.001$ ; ns = not significant.

branch of industry was performed to test mean differences between women and men in burnout, PBSE and the ten different stressors (based on T1 scores). Results revealed an overall difference between women and men (multivariate  $F = 18.80$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). More specifically, significant gender differences were found in burnout ( $F_{1,2163} = 30.20$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , women:  $M = 3.01$ ; men  $M = 2.78$ ) and in PBSE ( $F_{1,2163} = 9.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , women:  $M = 2.77$ ; men  $M = 2.63$ ). Significant gender differences emerged for about half of the stressors relating to work and private life respectively: women reported less opportunity to decide work pace ( $F_{1,2163} = 50.55$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), less satisfaction with quality of work done ( $F_{1,2163} = 6.82$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), less supervisor support ( $F_{1,2163} = 9.48$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and more often experience of overtime work ( $F_{1,2163} = 19.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Women also reported a higher workload at home ( $F_{1,2163} = 19.34$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and a higher workload at work ( $F_{1,2163} = 6.89$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the role of contingent self-esteem in the relationship between stressors

and burnout over time, with a focus on gender specific patterns. The results were in line with the assumption that a high initial work involvement relating to performance-based self-esteem is part of the burnout process [6]. Generally, the results showed PBSE was a stressor in itself but PBSE also increased the effects of work- and private life stressors on burnout. Due to the short time span the changes in PBSE and burnout over time were small and no longitudinal effects emerged. Yet, the overall findings were in line with the initial and theoretically based hypotheses: PBSE was strongly associated with burnout (Hypothesis 1), and fully mediated between two stressors and partially mediated between all other stressors and burnout (Hypothesis 3). Also, private life- and work life stressors were clearly associated with burnout (Hypothesis 2). The analyses of gender showed women scored higher on burnout and PBSE than did men (Hypothesis 4a). For women there were stronger associations between PBSE and burnout whereas for men there were stronger associations between the work stressors and burnout (Hypothesis 4b). However, as regards the mediation results, there were few differences between women and men (Hypothesis 4c).

Following previous research [4,10], the present study showed a main effect of PBSE on burnout. The predictive strength of PBSE was higher than that of the work- and private life stressors examined. In contrast to the widely recognized notion that personality factors are secondary to situational factors in explaining burnout [12,14], the present findings point up the importance of taking into consideration individual factors in investigating burnout. These findings are in line with burnout research within sport psychology [32–35] showing that not only motivational quantity but also motivational quality, is important for psychological adjustment [36]. However, in the present study, the relationship between PBSE and burnout was found reciprocal as PBSE was associated with higher burnout and the other way around. This can be explained by the fact that mean scores of PBSE and burnout did not change significantly over the one year time period between measurements.

Consequently, no longitudinal effects were found. As regards gender, women had significantly higher scores on both PBSE and burnout, which suggests women are at higher risk for burnout than are men. Further, the gender specific analyses showed that the explained variance added by PBSE to explain burnout was higher for women than for men which suggests that PBSE had a somewhat greater impact on burnout in women than in men.

Finally, the present findings showed that the stressors having the largest effects on both women's and men's burnout levels were peer social support and feelings of being significant for other individuals. These new findings suggest factors outside of work can contribute to burnout. These are important results because research including measures of the private sphere is scarce, since burnout has been considered exclusively related to work. In contrast to the Pines Burnout Measure, the Maslach Burnout Inventory is not even applicable for situations outside work. Moreover, the work stressors of conflicting demands and feelings of not having enough resources predicted burnout strongly in men. Such stressors can be considered in view of the current flexible work environment with less structured work and ways of making decisions less clear [37]. This study underlines the importance of improving these aspects in work life to prevent burnout. The gender separated analyses showed women rated work- and private life more negatively than men (e.g. fewer resources and less satisfied with quality and supervisor support as well as more work burden at work and in private life). This is consistent with previous research [38] and is

considered to result from women's lower level of influence in their work. Contrary to the hypothesis (hypothesis 4b), the present results showed that even though women rated their situation more negatively, the work stressors seem to influence men more than women in terms of burnout reactions, which can be explained by parenthood buffering the negative effect of poor work conditions on health in women [39]. However, overtime work was found to affect women more than men in terms of burnout, which can be explained by women's double work load resulting from combining gainful employment with family life. Extra hours at work can lead to conflicts between these areas.

The present study emphasized PBSE as an important factor in the burnout process. Even though PBSE only fulfilled the criteria for full mediation for two of the included variables, in partially mediating the relationships between the stressors and burnout, the findings showed PBSE is an important (albeit not necessary) individual factor in the relationship between the work- and private life situation and burnout in women and men. Specifically, PBSE was triggered by a situation characterized by stressors such as lack of resources, overtime work, and conflicting demands. This may follow from these individuals having difficulties in deciding when their work is good enough, which make them work too much in a work situation with few boundaries. In line with Crocker and Park's [3] reasoning, poor work conditions can trigger self-esteem staked on achievements, which, in turn, links to burnout. These mediating results indicate there is reason to widen the focus and examine how contextual factors can interact with personality characteristics and influence health.

#### *4.1. Limitations and conclusions*

As regards the stressors studied here, all were measured with single-items with repeated hierarchical regression analyses being performed for each single-item. Yet, the fairly low correlations between the different stressors indicate that they in fact measure different aspects of the work- and private life. Future research would benefit from investigating the role of PBSE, stressors, and burnout with at least three data points to outline the directions, preferably with structural equation modelling (SEM). Further, as self-report measures share certain error variance [40], future studies might use objective criteria of burnout based on medical records. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the field by showing that a high initial work involvement, conceptualized in terms of performance-

based self-esteem, seems to be a part of the burnout process and that contextual factors can act as triggers of this disposition. The gender specific analyses indicated dependency on achievements to prove one's worth is an important predictor of burnout, especially in women. For men, work stressors are of importance in explaining burnout. These gender differences are important to consider in prevention and rehabilitation of burnout.

To conclude, the present study furthers the understanding of the relations between characteristics of the individual, work- and private life stressors, and burnout. In particular, the study indicates that performance-based self-esteem can act both as a stressor in itself and by increasing the negative effect of stressors on burnout. This is important in the current work life, where work and private life get increasingly intertwined. Characteristics of the individual seem to be of increasing importance when delineating the effects of work on various health outcomes.

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