

Experiences of Being a Manager in the Municipal Sector in Rural Northern Sweden

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Abstract : The aim of this qualitative study was to describe experiences of work-related stress among highly stressed municipal employees in rural northern Sweden. We interviewed 15 employees in the municipal sector in rural northern Sweden using a semi-structured guide and subjected the interviews to qualitative content analysis. Under the main theme of Suffering Though Endless Chaos, we summarized four themes: facing incompatible interests and high demands due to lack of time and resources; feeling powerless, trapped, and ignored due to lack of control; feeling insufficient, insecure, and guilty due to challenging relations and high expectations; and struggling with consequences such as health problems, spillover effects on family life, and difficulty coping. Findings from this study suggest the importance of acknowledging suffering among municipal employees in a stressful work environment. An imbalance between job demands and resources is affecting both the health and family lives of employees and also their ability to work. It seems important to improve the work environment through supportive leadership, job control, and reasonable job demands to prevent stress, reduce suffering, and create a healthy organization.

Keywords : manager, municipal sector, occupational health, qualitative content analysis

Conference Title : ICOPOS 2022 : International Conference on Organizational Psychology and Occupational Stress

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : September 20-21, 2022