

## **Are occupational safety and health management systems implemented in practice? – Hanna Uusitalo**

### Objectives

Safety management and OSH management systems are considered important for developing occupational safety and health at workplaces. In this study we examined the connection between OSH management systems and the real situation at workplaces, as described by employees. Our research question was: how are management systems implemented in practice? The evaluation of OSH management systems was based on the inspection performed by the OSH authority. We were interested in whether the systems guarantee safety at workplaces, and whether they are prerequisites for safety at workplaces.

### Methods

The study was conducted in 26 industrial small and medium-sized enterprises. In the first phase, the authorities evaluated the OSH management systems, the result of which was an index (0-100) that reflected the existence of OSH management systems. In the second phase, the employees of these workplaces responded to a questionnaire survey (response rate 62%), which consisted of 44 questions regarding the practical implementation of the OSH management systems. The data was analyzed by studying whether the sections of the management systems that were rated highly by the inspectors were also rated highly by the employees.

### Results

First, workplaces valued the systematic evaluation of the management systems made by the inspectors. The evaluation made them consider the safety in diverse viewpoints. Second, the results of the inspection matched the views of the managers and supervisors more closely than those of the employees. Third, some management systems were implemented well, e.g. orientation, whereas others were not so well implemented, e.g. risk assessment of psychosocial stress hazards.

### Conclusion

In my presentation I will discuss the possible reasons for the differences between the management systems' index and the practical implementation of the systems, as described by the employees. I will also discuss the value of the management systems for small and medium-size enterprises.