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Johansson, Gerd; Rydenfält, Christofer; Hemphälä, Hillevi; Löndahl, Jakob; Jakobsson, Jonas; Odenrick, Per; Larsson, Per-Anders; Åkerman, Kristina; Arvidsson, Inger; Gremark-Simonsen, Jenny; Nordander, Catarina

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LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117
221 00 Lund
+46 46-222 00 00

OpDesign – A study of the working environment in an operating unit

Gerd Johansson, Christofer Rydenfält, Hillevi Hemphäla, Jakob Löndahl, Jonas Jakobsson and Per Odenrick, Ergonomics, Department of Design Sciences, Lund University, Sweden

Per-Anders Larsson and Kristina Åkerman, Helsingborg Hospital, Sweden

Inger Arvidsson, Jenny Gremark Simonsen and Catarina Nordander, Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Lund University, Sweden

In close collaboration with Helsingborg Hospital, an acute care hospital in southern Sweden, a group of researchers at Lund University has studied the work environment and work situation in an operating unit in a six-year project, OpDesign.

The aim of the project was to identify and examine the different factors that affect the work environment of the operating unit. A number of studies were implemented that focused on organizational and psychosocial factors as well as on the physical environment.

The results so far describe the problems and contribute new knowledge in different areas including:

- Teamwork and management of work in an operating unit
- Methodology for organizational development and innovation
- Patient safety
- Operating room lighting
- Musculoskeletal problems when working in an operating room
- Ventilation and diffusion of particles in the operating room

Experts from different scientific fields have collaborated and applied a variety of scientific methods in implementing the project. These methods have been both quantitative and qualitative, including measurements of physical parameters, video observations, surveys, interviews and estimation scales.

The OpDesign project has generated new knowledge about work in an operating unit and how it can be improved. Some of the suggested improvements have already been implemented in the daily activities, for example, new lighting in the operating room. Two doctoral dissertations presenting the results of the project have been defended in the spring of 2014.