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**Titel:** Explaining the gender gap in sickness absence: A cross-national comparison using the EU-LFS 2005 Module

**Abstract:** In most developed countries with high female labour force participation women are on average – at the national aggregate level – more sickness absent from work than men. This phenomenon has received much attention in later years, particularly in Northern Europe, but research on the topic has been inconclusive about what causes this gender gap. Theory suggests women are more absent than men due to the “double burden” of combining domestic and salary work, the gender segregated labour market, female pregnancies and higher morbidity among women, and women using health services more often than men. Some researchers have claimed there is little support for the two first hypotheses, suggesting the gender gap is primarily due to female pregnancies, women being less healthy than men, and perhaps health service usage. Nevertheless, in Scandinavian media and among policy makers the two social hypotheses are still often presented as likely causes. Previous research has included studies using Norwegian LFS data where these hypotheses were tested measuring gender segregation as the proportion of women in the occupation and number of children as a proxy variable to measure the “double burden”. However, this study aims to test these hypotheses by taking into account both horizontal and vertical gender segregation, and a series of questions relating to child care and whether or not the employee can start/end his or her working day, or organise his or her working time, for family reasons. The countries selected, including Finland, Norway, Spain and the UK, will represent different welfare regimes.