W Eriksen. Occ. Env. Med. (2006) Vol.63 p 428 – 434
Work factors as predictors of persistent fatigue: a prospective study of nurses' aides

A study of self reported fatigue among nurses' aides in Norway. Shift work was one of the variables assessed but the main focus was on psychosocial influences. Shift work was not identified as a significant predictor of persistent fatigue.

Factors which were associated with incident fatigue were: high work demands, being single, smoking more than 20 cigarettes per day and long term ill health. Psychosocial risk factors such as support from supervisor, turned out not to be consistently significant.

Factors which predicted recovery from baseline fatigue were: reduced work pace and less demanding work as well as; working in a nursing home.

Comment
Self reported fatigue is of course subject to the usual influences on perception and many of the exposure variables would also be subjective. Shift work was not identified as a significant factor.

The authors assert that a great many psychosocial variables were significant, but this seems to us to be a rather rosy interpretation of the results. There were sporadic significant associations with such factors but these would not build much confidence in their interpretation.

Supervisors can help manage fatigue by varying work demands. Help with managing persistent health problems, encouraging physical fitness and cessation of smoking would seem to be legitimate roles for the employer and had the strongest predictive power in this research.