The purpose of this study is to gain deeper understanding for what joy in work is and how it affects human health. The study’s research questions are: 1. What is joy? 2. What is joy in work? 3. What does joy in work mean for the human health?

The study is based on the caring science tradition which has been developed within the Department of Caring Science at the University of Åbo Akademi. The overall methodology and method in the study is hermeneutic. The study includes two separate studies, a literature study titled Joy of Baruch Spinoza and an empirical study titled Joy of work in nursing care. In study I, the philosopher Baruch Spinoza’s work Etik has been read and contemplated by hermeneutic reading. In study II a focus group interview has been done with a group of caregivers.

The result demonstrates joy in work as a multidimensional phenomenon. Joy in work can be divided into an outer dimension of community and an inner dimension to serve in love. The outer dimension includes the dimensions of joy in work which are related to other people and the working community. The inner dimension includes the dimensions of joy in work which are related to the human being itself. Joy in work is shared joy, love and community, pride and inner satisfaction, mutual gratitude, humor and conflict in a god mix. Joy in work also includes grief. Joy in work is never the same, it is constantly moving. What the movement depends on is individual for each person. For larger movement in joy in work it is important that the work gives the human being challenges and awareness of that her/his existence in this life has a meaning. This awareness comes out of serving in love.

Joy in work has a strong relationship to human health and suffering. Without the will to live suffering can paralyze the movement towards joy in work. Joy in work prevents and relieves suffering. Joy in work has the force required to completely paralyze suffering, at least for a moment. Joy in work strengthens own and other people’s health. Joy in work gives people energy, rest, peace of mind and a sense of wholeness and holiness.