WORK ORGANIZATION, JOB INSECURITY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

Paul A. Landsbergis, Joseph G. Grzywacz, Anthony LaMontagne

with contributions by:
Carles Muntaner, Joan Benach, Jane Lipscomb,
Jeffrey Johnson, Peter Schnall, Kevin Riley,
Jennifer Zelnick, Ellen Rosskam

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The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose
Changing Nature of Work in the Global Economy
Employment Conditions
- Formal/informal economy
- Forced labor
- Child labor
- Precarious/full-time permanent employment
- Unemployment
- Labor regulations
- Unionization of workforce

Organizational Factors
- Downsizing, outsourcing, privatization of public services
- Supply chains, subcontracting
- Temporary work
- Production systems
- Safety culture/climate
- Human resource policies

Job/Task-Specific Factors
- Physical, chemical, biomechanical hazards
- Long work hours, shiftwork
- Psychosocial job stressors

Mechanisms
- Physiological
- Psychological
- Behavioral

Occupational Health & Safety Outcomes
- Well-being
- Injury
- Illness
- Mortality

Industry/Sector: Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Transportation, other

Labor Stratification (high disparity risk): Race/Ethnicity, Immigration Status, Gender, Social Class, Age

Figure 1. Conceptual overview of the role of work organization in the creation of occupational health disparities
How Job Insecurity & Work Organization Can Produce Occupational Health Disparities

- **Differential exposure**
  - Greater exposure to job insecurity & work organization hazards in groups with less power:
    - Lower socioeconomic positions, women, racial & ethnic minorities, immigrants, younger workers

- **Differential vulnerability**
  - Greater effects of job insecurity & work organization hazards on health & safety in groups with less power
Job Insecurity

PRECARIOUS WORK affects us all

But.......
## Summary of studies on JOB INSECURITY & occupational health disparities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower SES workers</th>
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<th>Racial &amp; ethnic minority workers, immigrants</th>
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<td>Differential (greater) exposure to job insecurity</td>
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<td>Differential (greater) vulnerability to job insecurity</td>
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+ or - = consistency of findings  
Shaded red = small number of studies (<5)
Other work organization hazards
Summary of studies on WORK ORGANIZATION HAZARDS & occupational health disparities

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Strategies for Reducing Job insecurity and Work Organization Hazards

- **National/international levels**
  - policies, laws, regulations and standards
  - UK Health & Safety Executive 2004 Mgmt Standards:
    - employer policies/procedures to deal with job stressors
  - countries w/ stronger social protections (Scandinavia):
    - narrower SES & gender differences in low job control
    - weaker assoc. betw/ job stressors & depression Sx
  - U.S. states: safe staffing levels, voluntary O/T
  - California: new law prohibits “willfull misclassification” of employees as independent contractors
Strategies for Reducing Job insecurity and Work Organization Hazards

- **Industry/organizational levels**
  - collective bargaining
  - integrated occup. health-health promotion programs: benefits at both individual & organizational levels (for example, reducing rates of sickness absence)
  - worker participation: feature of effective programs
  - Maintenance Cooperation Trust Fund:
    - identified labor abuses in retail chains that contracted janitorial services that failed to comply with labor laws
    - developed legal cases, won >$26 million in back pay over 3 yrs
Strategies for Reducing Job insecurity and Work Organization Hazards

- Individual levels
  - time management skills training
  - no benefits seen at organizational level
Worker participation

- Worker groups with less power
  - lower SES; temp workers, especially women; night shift
- less likely to:
  - participate in such programs
  - be represented in consultative forums (e.g., labor-management committees)
- less likely to complain about work hazards
- Programs need to focus on such workers
Case studies

- Low-wage workers classified as independent contractors
- Social service workers
- Civil aviation workers
Discussion questions

What can employers, workers & labor unions do to:

- minimize exposure to work organization hazards such as temp work, low job control, work-family conflicts?
- reduce differences in exposure — the higher levels of exposure to such hazards faced by lower income workers, racial & ethnic minority workers, younger workers, and, for some hazards, women workers?

What challenges stand in the way of enacting local, state or Federal laws or regulations designed to minimize exposure to work organization hazards?
Discussion questions

- What research is needed to strengthen the evidence-base to answer: "do differences in work organization hazards between groups of workers contribute to occupational health disparities"?

- What issues or constraints need to be addressed to be able to conduct intervention research or research studies on work organization hazards with a strong "translational" impact, that is studies that have a practical use in the workplace or when developing public policy?
We welcome feedback on:
- concepts
- research studies
- prevention programs
- recommendations

http://www.aoecdata.org/conferences/healthdisparities/synopses.html