Work and Stress in Post-Recession Britain

Tarani Chandola
CCSR and Social Statistics
University of Manchester
• Measuring work stress and trends
• Determinants
• Consequences
• Managing work stress
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Incidence of work-related stress in GB
2001/02-2010/11
Average days lost per case of work related stress 2001/02-2010/11
Work-related stress in the Labour Force Survey

Have you suffered from any illness, disability or other physical or mental problem that was caused or made worse by your job or by work you have done in the past?

How would you describe this illness?

bone, joint or muscle problems which mainly affect (or is mainly connected with) arms, hands, neck or shoulder, /...hips, legs or feet,/ ...back,
breathing or lung problems,
skin problems,
hearing problems,
**stress, depression or anxiety,**
headache and/or eyestrain,
heart disease / attack, other circulatory system,
infectious disease (virus, bacteria)
other
Definition of work-related stress in the Labour Force Survey

- Individuals are asked to self-report any work-related illness they believe to have suffered over the previous 12 months

- Laypeople’s ability and willingness to self-diagnose

- People may ascribe the cause of illness to work when there is no such link

- People may fail to recognise a link with working conditions when there is one

- Conflating work stressor with stress response
Number of cases reported by psychiatrists and occupational physicians to THOR database

![Graph showing the number of cases reported from 1999 to 2009. The graph compares anxiety/depression and other work-related stress cases over the years. The anxiety/depression cases show a peak in 2001 and a decrease thereafter, while the other work-related stress cases show a steady increase.]
Models of work stressors

• Demand control model
• Effort Reward Imbalance model
• Management Standards model
Measuring work stress
Trends
Determinants
Costs
Managing work stress
Job demand/control/strain model
(Karasek and Theorell)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Demands</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>PASSIVE</td>
<td>LOW STRAIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>HIGH STRAIN</td>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percentage of employees in British Skills Survey with “high-strain” jobs, 1992–2006

Green 2009: Job Quality in Britain
Effort-reward imbalance at work

-(extrinsic) demands
-(intrinsic) obligations

-effort

-reward

-wage, salary
-esteeem
-promotion/security

Siegrist, 1996
HSE Management Standards

The six areas are:

- **Demands:** workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say the person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
- **Relationships:** promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles
- **Change:** How organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated in the organisation.
Trends in Management Standards Indicators

Packham and Webster (2009): HSE
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Conceptual overview of wellbeing at work

Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project
Percentage of cases of anxiety and depression reported by psychiatrists and occupational physicians to THOR database, by precipitating event 2007-2009

- Low job control, perceived lack of support and poor management: 15%
- Changes at work: 10%
- Bullying/sexual harassment: 8%
- Difficulties with manager: 7%
- Home-work interface: 4%
Percentage of employees who think they are likely to lose their job as a result of the current economic climate

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2011
Percentage of employees feeling they are under pressure at work *everyday*

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2011
Percentage of employees who have noticed increased conflict at work between colleagues

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2010

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2010
Percentage of employees disagreeing their organisation provides support to manage their work-life balance

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2011

CIPD: Employment Outlook Surveys 2009-2011
Job demands and control by country

The occupational gradient in job strain in the Whitehall II study (note: a z score of 0 represents the mean job strain)

Chandola and Marmot 2010
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Trends in unemployment rates and “job insecurity”

Trends in male “job insecurity” and male suicide rate aged 15–44

ONS: Labour Force Surveys and UK Suicide Rates
Work Stress and Cardiovascular Disease Risk

Systematic reviews of the association of work stress with heart disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st author</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>papers</th>
<th>analysis</th>
<th>Effect on CHD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eller</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>sys review</td>
<td>Moderate evidence for job demands, iso-strain, low support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivimaki</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>meta-analysis</td>
<td>50% excess relative risk among employees reporting work stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netterstrøm</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>sys review</td>
<td>23 studies show an association with work stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuper</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>sys review</td>
<td>10 studies show an association with work stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chandola Stress at Work (2011)
Risk of Metabolic Syndrome by duration of exposure to work stressors

Odds Ratios of Metabolic Syndrome

Exposures to Job-Strain

- no exposures (491/5178)
- 1 exposure (134/1253)
- 2 exposures (54/383)
- 3 or more exposures (41/220)

Systematic review of psychophysiological biomarkers of workplace stressors

Longitudinal studies on work stress and sickness absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st author</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>sample: women, men</th>
<th>exposure</th>
<th>increased relative risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roelen</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>109w, 217m</td>
<td>low reward</td>
<td>m: 56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtanen</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6663w, 1323m</td>
<td>job strain</td>
<td>w: 17%, m: 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ala-Mursula</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12127w, 4012m</td>
<td>job strain</td>
<td>w: 27% , m: 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ala-Mursula</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12127w, 4012m</td>
<td>effort-reward imbalance</td>
<td>w: 21% , m: 41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westerlund</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>24036w+m</td>
<td>moderate downsizing</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahtera</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16521w, 5909m</td>
<td>major downsizing</td>
<td>18 extra sickness absence days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kivimaki</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>764w+m</td>
<td>major downsizing</td>
<td>117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahtera</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>530w+m</td>
<td>decreased job control</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahtera</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>530w+m</td>
<td>decreased work support</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahtera</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>530w+m</td>
<td>increased job demands</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chandola Stress at Work (2011)
Economic costs to individuals, employers and society of workplace accidents and work related ill health

- Lost earnings
- Extra expenditure when absent
- Human costs (pain, grief, suffering)
- Absence/Presenteeism costs
- Administrative costs
- Recruitment costs
- Damage from injuries/non-injuries
- Compensation & insurance costs
- Administrative costs
- Loss of output
- Damage, administration, medical treatment & investigations costs

Individuals
Employers
Society

HSE (1999)
Costs to Britain of workplace accidents and work-related ill health

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Choosing a Target for Work Stress Intervention

Who is experiencing work stress?

A large % of those exposed to work stressor

An identifiable subgroup

A few individuals, idiosyncratic

Is the stressor modifiable?

Yes

Target the WORK STRESSOR

No

Can exposure to the stressor be reduced?

Yes

Reduce exposure to WORK STRESSOR

No

Is there a workplace buffer which protects against the effect of the stressor?

Yes

Target the WORKPLACE BUFFER

No

Is the workplace buffer modifiable?

Yes

Target the WORKPLACE BUFFER

No

Target the INDIVIDUAL

adapted from Heaney and Ryn 1990
Work Stress and the Law

http://www.jehealth.org/services/stress-law-wizard/
31.7% of employers say this section is left blank. A further 44.4% of employers say this section is infrequently completed. Source: XpertHR survey.
How does the fit note compare to the old sick note?

- Encourages greater dialogue between employer and employee:
  - 1: least effective: 8.1%
  - 2: 20.8%
  - 3: 28.1%
  - 4: 32.6%
  - 5: most effective: 9.5%
  - Don't know: 0.9%

- Easier to administer - one form instead of two:
  - 1: least effective: 5.9%
  - 2: 12.7%
  - 3: 42.5%
  - 4: 27.1%
  - 5: most effective: 8.2%
  - Don't know: 3.6%

- Empowers employee to help influence their own return to work:
  - 1: least effective: 12.2%
  - 2: 25.3%
  - 3: 30.8%
  - 4: 24.0%
  - 5: most effective: 5.0%
  - Don't know: 2.7%

- Greater range of options means more informed discussion on fitness to work:
  - 1: least effective: 16.3%
  - 2: 22.2%
  - 3: 31.2%
  - 4: 23.1%
  - 5: most effective: 6.8%
  - Don't know: 0.4%

- Encourages earlier return to work:
  - 1: least effective: 14.9%
  - 2: 24.4%
  - 3: 30.3%
  - 4: 21.7%
  - 5: most effective: 5.4%
  - Don't know: 3.3%

- Promotes cultural change that work can be good for you:
  - 1: least effective: 19.0%
  - 2: 22.6%
  - 3: 31.7%
  - 4: 19.0%
  - 5: most effective: 5.0%
  - Don't know: 2.7%

- Encourages greater dialogue between employer and GP/healthcare services:
  - 1: least effective: 24.9%
  - 2: 27.6%
  - 3: 26.2%
  - 4: 12.2%
  - 5: most effective: 2.7%
  - Don't know: 6.4%

- GP advice helps avoid unnecessary referrals to occupational health:
  - 1: least effective: 29.4%
  - 2: 32.1%
  - 3: 19.5%
  - 4: 9.5%
  - 5: most effective: 2.7%
  - Don't know: 6.8%

- Unnecessary sickness absence rate has fallen in organisation:
  - 1: least effective: 34.8%
  - 2: 22.6%
  - 3: 26.7%
  - 4: 7.2%
  - 5: most effective: 1.4%
  - Don't know: 7.3%

n = 221.
Source: XpertHR.
Job Creation AND Job Quality