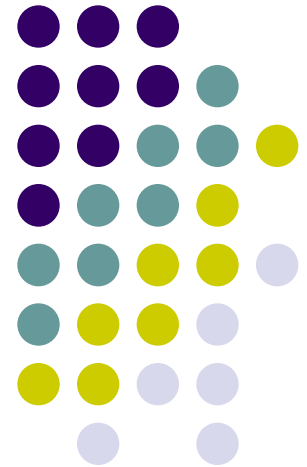


Public policy for the prevention and compensation of mental health problems related to work: issues of importance for women

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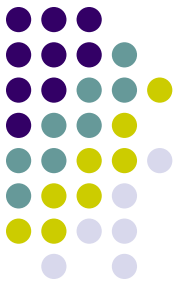
International Congress Women, Work and Health,
Zacatecas, October, 2008

Themes to be developed



- Law and policy for
 - **Prevention** of mental health problems related to psycho-social risk factors at work
 - **Compensation** for disability associated with work-related mental health problems
- Implications for women workers
 - Gender differences in exposure and access to protection
 - Importance of considering gender of inspectors and decision makers in the implementation of legislative protections

WHO: Workers' health: global plan of action



- 11. «The assessment and management of health risks at the workplace should be improved by: defining essential interventions for prevention and control of mechanical, physical, chemical, biological and **psychosocial risks** in the working environment. Such measures include also integrated management of...health-impact assessment of **new technologies, work processes ...»**
 - Endorsed at the 6th World Health Assembly, 23 May 2007

Top 10 emerging psycho-social risk factors (Delphi study of experts)



- Precarious contracts / unstable labour market
- Increased worker vulnerability/globalisation
- New forms of employment contracts
- Feeling of job insecurity
- Ageing workforce
- Long working hours
- Work intensification
- Lean production and outsourcing
- High emotional demands at work
- Poor work-life balance
 - European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2007

Gender issues



- Women are more exposed to stressors:
 - In occupations that are more exposed to stressful working conditions
 - Eurofound, 2007
 - More often the target of psychological harassment:
 - 17.3% of women and 12.6% of men reported being targets of psychological harassment in the previous 12 months
 - EQCOTESST (Québec), 2008
 - the majority of complainants for psychological harassment and occupational violence
 - CSST, 2008 / Brun & Kedl, 2006/ Lippel, 2005

Gender issues



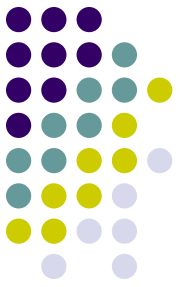
- Women are more exposed to stressors associated with challenges to work-family balance:
 - Women assume a greater share of work in the home
 - Diaz & Mauro, 2008
 - They are therefore more vulnerable to inadequate policies on work-family balance
 - Scheduling (unpredictability, variability, long hours, mandatory overtime etc)
 - Lack of organisational support for work-family balance
 - Williams, 2008



Gender issues

- Women are more likely to suffer from mental health problems as a consequence of the exposure
 - more likely to have adverse mental health problems associated with precarious employment
 - Kim et al, 2008
- Overall job strain -population attributable risk for depression was 13.2% for males and 17.2% for females
 - Lamontagne et al, 2008

Gender issues: implementation of legislation



- Women and men perceive and interpret situations of harassment differently
 - Salin, 2008
- What is the predominant gender of inspectors, adjudicators and members of OHS committees in your country?

Legislative and policy strategies for prevention



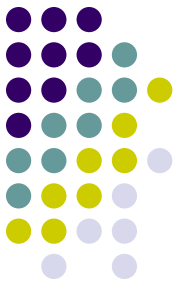
- Policies examined
 - General provisions addressing PSR factors
 - Workplace violence
 - Risk of physical aggression
 - Psychological harassment
- Actors
 - Labour inspectors
 - Unions and employers
 - Occupational health and safety committees
 - Occupational physicians and managers

Challenges for the inspectorate



- Prevention of psycho-social risk factors requires different skills from those traditionally required of labour inspectors
 - Ability to deal with emotional situations
 - Intangibility of risk factors
 - Staffing requirements: inspectors over-solicited
 - Johnstone, Quinlan and McNamara, 2008

Legislation for prevention of workplace violence



- *European framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work, 2007*
- Canada:
 - Regulations explicitly targeting violence in the form of physical or verbal aggression
 - Canada OHS Regulations: *Violence prevention in the Workplace, 2008*
 - Bullying included as a possible contributor to workplace violence
 - Regulations targeting working alone

Psychological harassment: legislative initiatives



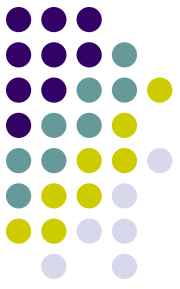
- Legislation adopted in
 - Sweden, 1993
 - Finland, 2002
 - France, 2002
 - Belgium, 2002
 - Québec, 2004
 - South Australia
 - Saskatchewan, 2007

Harassment: how existence of legislation drives prevention



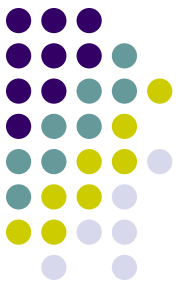
- Regardless of numbers of accepted claims, existence of legislation forces social partners to access information for prevention purposes
 - Employers responsible for prevention
 - Unions responsible for implementation of recourse for their members
 - SCFP/CUPE, 2008
 - Cox, 2008

Legislative and policy strategies for workers' compensation



- Policies addressed
 - Income replacement for workers with
 - Disabling mental health problems attributable to violence and acutely stressful situations
 - Disabling mental health problems attributable to chronic stress
 - At stake: health care, income and support in return to work
- Actors
 - Workers' compensation boards/social insurance systems
 - Workplace actors: Employers, unions
 - Health care professionals

Policy drives prevention; prevention drives research; research drives prevention: ISTAS-21



- Risk assessment mandated by European framework directive 89/391/EEC and Spanish legislation
 - ISTAS: research arm of the Comisiones obreras
 - ISTAS-21 is the Spanish adaptation of CoPsoQ
 - Use for union members of health and safety committees for the purpose of risk assessment of psycho-social risk factors
 - ISTAS: 50 researchers, training 200 assessors, providing service to 70,000 union delegates in the workplace
 - <http://www.istas.net/web/portada.asp>

Research action collaboration: Chile-Canada



Research, Policy and Practice with regard to
Work-related Mental Health Problems in
Chile: A Gender Perspective



<http://www.proyectoaraucaaria.cl/>



For more information:

*International Journal of Law
and Psychiatry*, vol.30: 4-5,
2007

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