

Working makes for a happier retirement

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People over 65 but still working feel better than those who have retired, new research shows.

Initial results from the Health, Work and Retirement Longitudinal Study, carried out by researchers at Massey University's School of Psychology, have been released. The study collates information gathered from 6662 people aged between 55 and 70 regarding their transition from work to retirement and how it affects their health.

Researcher Dr Fiona Alpass says data collected from the first questionnaire indicates those still employed past the age of 65 rate their own mental health higher than those who have stopped working.

“But we don't know yet whether retirement leads to poor mental health or whether poor mental health leads to early retirement. I suspect it is a combination of both, but the data from upcoming questionnaires is needed to confirm that.”

Unease about their financial situation once retired was also a concern.

“Almost half of our working respondents thought their living standards would decline in retirement. However, it must be noted that a large percentage thought they would stay the same.”

She says most participants were also concerned about future economic trends and the effect they may have on retirement living standards.

But while the study's participants expressed concerns about retirement, a significant percentage of those still employed had done little in the way of planning for their retirement.

“Planning has mainly consisted of discussing retirement with their spouse or partner.”

Dr Alpass says the research team will carry out two-yearly questionnaires with the participating group and track the changes in their work and retirement situation and the relationship of these changes to health and well-being.

“These first findings have given us a snapshot of the current work and retirement experiences of the group. It will be interesting to see how their views change over the next few years.”

Questionnaires for the second round of data collection will be sent out later this week.

Source: Massey University's

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