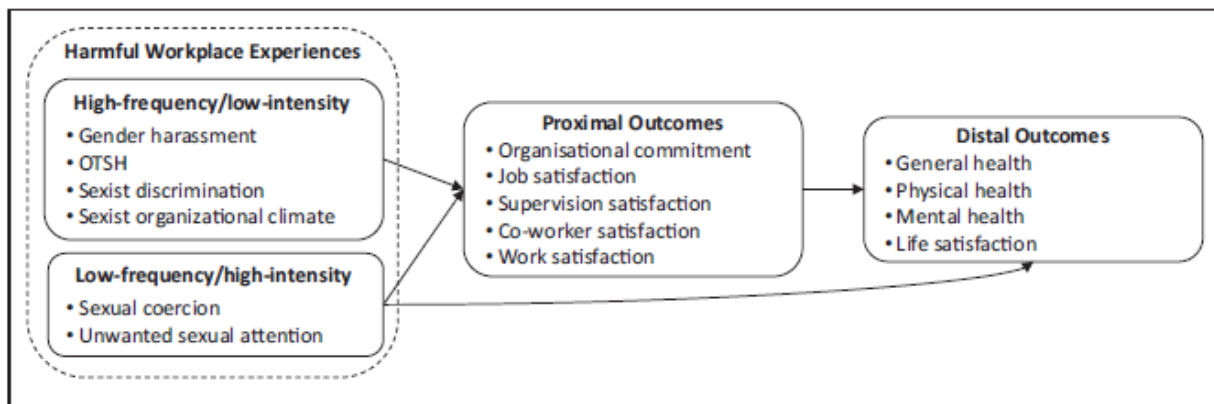


Covert and overt forms of sexism are equally damaging to working women

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Relation between harmful workplace experiences, proximal and distal occupational well-being indicators. Credit: Victor E. Sojo, Robert E. Wood, and Anna E. Genat

Frequent sexist wisecracks, comments and office cultures where women are ignored are just as damaging to women as single instances of sexual coercion and unwanted sexual attention, according to a new study out today in *The Psychology of Women Quarterly*.

"Norms, leadership, or policies, that reduce intense harmful experiences may lead managers to believe that they have solved the problem of maltreatment of [women](#) in the workplace," wrote the study authors Dr. Victor E. Sojo, Dr. Robert E. Wood and Anna E. Genat. "However, the

more frequent, less intense, and often unchallenged [gender harassment](#), sexist discrimination, sexist organizational climate and organizational tolerance for [sexual harassment](#) appeared at least as detrimental for women's wellbeing. They should not be considered lesser forms of sexism."

Through an analysis of 88 independent studies of a combined 73,877 working women, the researchers found the following associations:

- Sexism and gender harassment were just as harmful to working women's individual health and work attitudes as common job stressors such as work overload and poor working conditions.
- When women are the targets of sexism and harassment in the workplace, they are more dissatisfied with supervisors than co-workers.
- There was a trend of a more negative effect of sexism and harassment in male-dominated workplaces, such as the armed forces and financial and legal services firms. However, the authors suggested this required further research.

The authors further wrote: "Our results suggest that organizations should have zero tolerance for low intensity sexism, the same way they do for overt [harassment](#). This will require teaching workers about the harmful nature of low intensity sexist events, not only for women, but also for the overall organizational climate."

More information: Find out more by reading the full article, "Harmful Workplace Experiences and Women's Occupational Wellbeing: A Meta-Analysis."

Provided by SAGE Publications

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