

# Study links higher work demand to serious health risk potential

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Employees under prolonged workplace pressures face serious consequences to their health, according to a working paper issued by the *National Bureau of Economic Research*.

"Increased job effort can raise productivity and income but put workers at increased risk of illness and [injury](#)," said the study's co-author Chong Xiang, Purdue professor of economics.

Purdue's Krannert School of Management Dean David Hummels and Jakob Munch of the University of Copenhagen also are co-authors for the study.

The researchers analyzed data collected on the Danish manufacturing sector. Denmark's universal health care system provided access to data on doctor visits, prescription drug uses, hospitalization, sick days and job injuries. The researchers examined how, over time, changes in work demand, caused by changes in exports, affected workers' efforts and injury and sickness rates. The changes in exports, in turn, were driven by economic shocks originating outside of Denmark. The use of these outside shocks allows the researchers to go beyond correlation and establish causality.

The findings show that rising exports led to longer work hours and higher [work](#) intensity, and higher injury and sickness rates. For example, a 10 percent rise in exports increased women's rates of injury by 6 percent, severe depression by 2.5 percent, and heart attacks or strokes by

15 percent.

## How to deal with work pressure?

"In our culture we don't seem very comfortable talking about personal mental health issues," said Chong. "As a society, we can support each other better if we're just more open about such conversations."

**More information:** No Pain, No Gain: The Effects of Exports on Effort, Injury, and Illness. <ftp.iza.org/dp10036.pdf>

Provided by Purdue University

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