

Study documents the adverse effects of casual, temporary and on-call labor

October 18 2016

Precarious labour has severe health impacts on racialized immigrant women, according to a new Ryerson University study.

The study, released to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17), documented the experiences of 40 racialized immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area who were mainly working in the personal services and food sectors.

"This research illustrates the extreme and adverse effects of casual, temporary and on-call work on the mental and physical health of women, their safety at work, as well as the health of the communities they care for," stated Winnie Ng, Unifor-Sam Gindin Chair in Social Justice and Democracy and principal investigator.

"We found that the more precarious an immigrant worker is, the worse her health," added Dr. Aparna Sundar, research coordinator and co-author of the report. "We also saw the cascading effects on their families, their children and their communities."

Highlights of the report's key findings include:

- Precarious employment, which is typified by low wages and just-in-time schedules, has been a major source of the chronic and acute health problems experienced by these racialized women.
- Participants provided a shocking list of injuries and harm sustained at their workplaces due to poor health and safety

standards.

- Temp agency staff who work around the clock with little rest and increasing workloads are unable to provide the care each patient needs and deserves.

The publication of the study comes at an important moment as the Special Advisors to the Ministry of Labour start drafting their final recommendations for the Changing Workplaces Review. The Ontario government is currently reviewing the Employment Standards Act and the Labour Relations Act to address the rapid growth of precarious work.

"We have a looming health epidemic on our hands that needs urgent attention," said Dr. Jennifer Poole, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Ryerson University and co-author of the report. "The study provides evidence for the critical need for major legislative reform to support racialized women workers."

Specific recommendations include:

- At least seven legislated paid sick days
- Access to personal emergency leave
- Joint and several liability between employers and their use of contractors and agencies

More information: "Working so hard and still so poor!"

[www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/clmr/publications/Final%20Report%20\(Precarious%20Work\).pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/clmr/publications/Final%20Report%20(Precarious%20Work).pdf)

Provided by Ryerson University

Citation: Study documents the adverse effects of casual, temporary and on-call labor (2016, October 18) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-documents-adverse-effects-casual-temporary.html>

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