

Traumas do not impact job satisfaction

December 11 2017

Each year about a quarter of all workers will be confronted potentially traumatic events, such as crime, accidents, serious illness or death of a significant other. Part of the affected workers will develop very severe posttraumatic stress symptoms. However, in contrast to our expectations these events and symptoms do not have a negative impact on job satisfaction.

Their job satisfaction compared to non-affected workers is not lower or higher, showing that affected workers are resilient in other domains of life. Admittedly, part of the affected workers report low post-event levels of job satisfaction but, similar to non-affected workers, they already had low levels before the events.

These are the main outcomes of a new prospective study among about 800 adult workers in the Netherlands, conducted by Tilburg University in cooperation with the University of Pavia (Italy). For the present study, data was extracted from the Longitudinal Internet for the Social Sciences-panel (LISS-panel) based on a traditional random sample of the Dutch population.

Job satisfaction as well as mental health was measured twice over one year. The course of job satisfaction was assessed of workers who were or were not confronted with [traumatic events](#) during that year. Results showed that affected and non-affected workers did not differ in the course of satisfaction. In addition, we assessed to what extent pre-event satisfaction, post-traumatic [stress symptoms](#) and coping self-efficacy explained post-event job satisfaction (besides other variables). Findings

indicate that post-event job satisfaction is predominantly explained by pre-event satisfaction, and not by trauma.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first prospective comparative study assessing the impact of traumas in daily life on job satisfaction, using a population based sample. The findings suggest that possible concerns about their impact on [job satisfaction](#) and on atmosphere among colleagues [satisfaction](#) could be relaxed somewhat as long as needed support is provided. Furthermore, our study shows that when resilience is defined in term of the absence of [mental health](#) problems only, we underestimate the resilience of affected workers.

More information: Peter G. van der Velden et al. Potentially Traumatic Events and Job Satisfaction, *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000001237](https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000001237)

Provided by Tilburg University

Citation: Traumas do not impact job satisfaction (2017, December 11) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-12-traumas-impact-job-satisfaction.html>

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