

Retirement brings health gains, with workaholics benefiting the most, research says

September 14 2018, by Tony Trueman



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People who retire feel less unhealthy than those who continue in employment, and those working long hours benefit the most, new

research says.

The British Sociological Association conference in Belfast heard today [Friday, 14 September 2018] that the common idea that [retirement](#) leaves workaholics most at risk of [poor health](#) was incorrect.

Dr. Jacques Wels, of the University of Cambridge, analysed [survey data](#) on 2,861 people in England aged 55 to 65 in 2008 and then in 2014. Participants were asked to rate their health on a five-point scale.

Some had retired by 2014 but others had continued working – in 2011 the UK abolished the mandatory retirement ages, so workers are free to decide when they wish to retire.

Dr. Wels told the 'Work, Employment and Society' event that, overall, 26 percent of workers who had retired felt less healthy after retirement, and 18 percent felt healthier.

By comparison, 29 percent of those who stayed in employment and kept working the same hours felt unhealthier, and 16 percent felt healthier.

He also found that 21 percent of those working 60+ hours a week reported [better health](#) after retiring, and 22 percent worse health; 19 percent of those working 35 hours a week before their retirement reported better health afterwards and 25 percent worse health; 18 percent of those working 25 hours reported better health and 26 percent worse health.

Dr. Wels adjusted the raw data in order to compare people with similar wealth, qualifications, gender, age and sector of activity, in order to isolate the effects of retirement and reducing hours.

"Those who retired and who had a high working time prior to retirement

were more likely to experience a positive change in self-perceived health compared with those who worked fewer hours before retiring – and this effect was independent of their incomes," said Dr. Wels.

"These findings contradict the common idea that retirement leaves workaholics at a loose end and at risk of poor health because they cannot adjust to their new situation.

"Previous research had not shown up the link between higher self-reported [health](#) among those working the most hours."

Provided by British Sociological Association

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