

Normative strain or economic burden?

Partner unemployment & mental health in different economic contexts in Finland.

Authors: Bister, L.^{1,2}; Junna, L.³; Moustgaard, H.^{3,4}; Malmberg, S.³; Janssen, F.^{5,1}; Vogt, T.^{1,6} & Martikainen, P.³

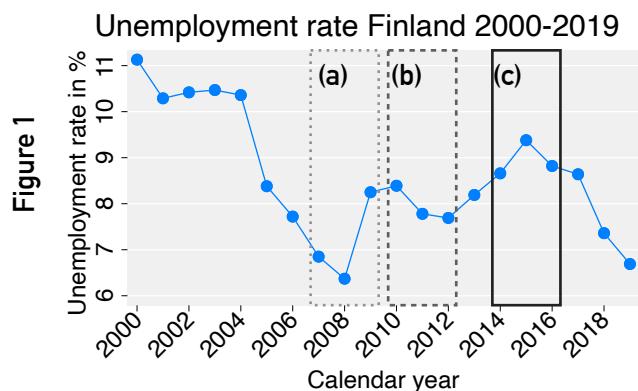
 Our study's objective To assess the mental health effects of partner unemployment in different economic contexts (in Finland, 2000-2019). Scan the QR code for poster & contact.



Problem statement Partner unemployment may adversely affect mental health (cf. Family Stress Model, Masarik et al. 2016), yet current research lacks comprehensive population study & understanding the role of the economic context. Two competing theories explain the relation: (1) Double Border Hypothesis + (2) Social Norm Hypothesis (see Table 1).



Study period | Three different economic contexts:
(a) low, (b) increasing, & (c) high unemployment



Methodology



Data

- Finnish population registers (individual level)
- Longitudinal (quarter-years), 3 sampling periods (Fig. 1)

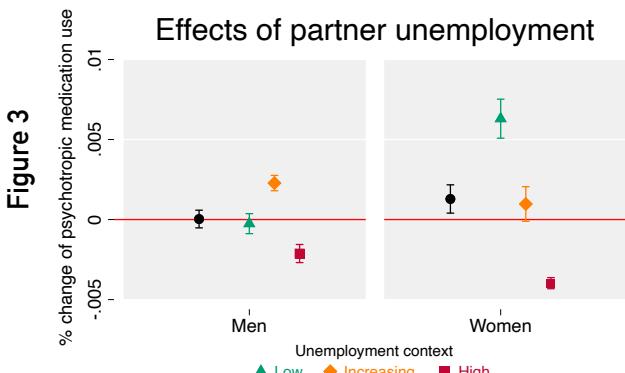
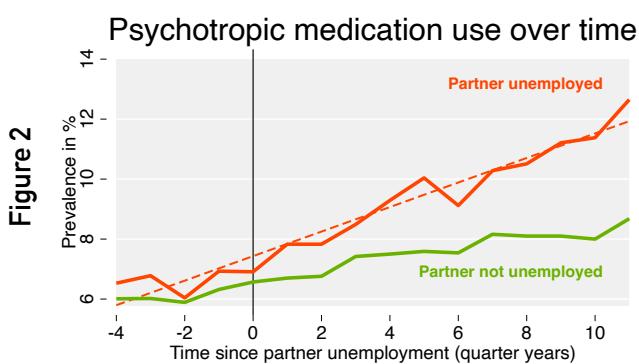
Sample

- Cohabiting different-sex union (married & unmarried)
- Working age: 18-63, partner in employment
- 10% sample: n = 560,043 over N = 8,924,780

Analysis

Individual-level fixed effects regression **by sex**: estimates effects of **partner unemployment** (predictor) on **psychotropic medication** (health outcome) use across different **unemployment periods** (moderation effect).

Results & Discussion



Take-home-message
Adverse mental health from their partners' unemployment due to normative strain for women.

Table 1: Main conclusions

Men Women



Theoretical explanations
(competing hypotheses):

(1) **Double Burden Hypothesis**
(= decreased re-employment chances & increased financial pressure for families during periods of high unemployment)

Partially

No

(2) **Social Norm Hypothesis**
(= lesser selection into unemployment and less stigmatisation due to the "social norm of unemployment" during periods of high unemployment)

Partially

Yes