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**Increasing retirement age and mental health of older workers: the role of working conditions**

The aging population in the EU poses a significant challenge to pension systems, leading to reforms that extend the working lifespan. However, the delay in retirement age may result in declining health and well-being of older workers (Bertoni, Brunello, & Da Re, 2023; Serrano-Alarcón, et al., 2023; Carrino, Glaser, & Avendano, 2020; de Grip, Lindeboom, & Montizaan, 2009), placing an additional burden on social protection systems. Conversely, extended work lifespans may encourage businesses to invest in skills of senior workers (Hairault, Sopraseuth, & Langot, 2010) and adapt jobs to their capabilities (Miranti & Li, 2020), as well as motivate workers to adopt healthier behaviors (Bertoni, Brunello, & Mazzarella, 2018). Our study contributes to this ongoing debate by exploring the heterogeneous effects of reforms delaying the retirement age on late-career mental health depending on working conditions.

We combine longitudinal data for 2011 and 2015 over 12 European countries from the Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe and the European Working Conditions Survey. We focus on individuals aged 50 or above, maintaining continuous employment status throughout the study period, and not working beyond the legal retirement age. The resulting sample is a balanced panel of 3,922 workers.

We use a difference-in-differences design, exploiting the effects of pension reforms both between and within countries. The mental health of workers is measured by the 12-point Euro-D score, a clinical measure of depression. We investigate linear changes in this score and the likelihood of passing above a given threshold using OLS. To evaluate the significance of different job quality dimensions, we run a series of models on samples reduced to those above and below the median of each dimension. We also consider gender-specific dynamics, in line with previous studies (Bertoni, Brunello, & Mazzarella, 2018; Serrano-Alarcón, et al., 2023; Belloni, Carrino, & Meschi, 2022).

Preliminary results show that the lengthening of the work horizon negatively affects the mental health of older workers, particularly when they have less favorable working conditions. There are significant variations by gender: when the retirement age is raised, the depression score increases by 1.1 for males in lower-skilled jobs with poor physical environments and by 0.7 for females in highly intensive jobs with inadequate social environments. Our results support that reforms of the retirement age should be associated with policies addressing occupational and gender disparities in working conditions.

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