



Emerging Health & Safety Issues from Changing Workplaces
– A Canadian Discussion –

The Evolving Workplace

Presented by

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Overview of Presentation

- Some significant changes to work, employment practices and workforce composition
- Evidence on health effects of flexible work
- Policy challenges/impacts on vulnerable groups
- Evidence of weakened regulatory protection and problems for employers, unions, community
- Potential remedies for policy makers, employers and unions



Global Changes to Business Practices and Regulation

- Repeated downsizing/restructuring
- Privatisation/new public sector management
- Offshoring/outsourcing and comp tendering
- Growth of franchising and labour leasing
- Corporate veil and elaborate supply chains
- Neo-liberal policies-price/markets and trade
- Commerce law subordinates social protection



Changes to Work Organisation and Labour Markets

- Shift from manufacturing to service sector
- Fall in permanent jobs and job security
- Growth of:
 - temporary, agency, fixed-contract work
 - micro business and own account subcontractors
 - part-time, home-based work & telework
 - multiple job-holding and unpaid overtime
- Growing shiftwork/stalled trend to shorter hours



Changes to Population and Workforce

- Aging population-ex baby boom/birth-rates
- Increased female workforce participation
- In-sourcing/foreign worker arrivals:
 - Immigration (business, special skills)
 - Temporary (students, tourists, guestworkers)
 - Refugees and illegal immigration



A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce

- In 2005 13% of Canadians over 65 (22% by 2026) & 8.1% worked (compared to 6.7% in 2002)
- 2004 – 39% of paid workers had registered pension plan (45.4% in 1983)
- Percentage of workforce within 10 years of retirement (1987 – 11%; 2002 – 20%)
- Not working due to health reasons increases with age, especially for women (Pyper 2006)



A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce *cont...*

- Labour force participation of women with children increased from 39% in 1986 to 45% in 2005
- Also increase in dual income couples and more equal income share (Marshall, 2006)
- Earnings instability far higher amongst families in lower third of income scale - government transfers critical offset (Morissette & Ostrovsky 2006)



A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce *cont...*

- 18% of Canadian population foreign born in 2001 and by 2017 20% could be 'visible minority' (Berlanger & Malefant, 2005)
- Chronic low income feature of recent immigrants and has profound family effects (Picot et al 2007)
- 2007 15.4% of Canadian workforce self-employed (increasing faster than total employment)



A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian Workforce *cont...*

- 2007 11.9% of employees held a temporary job (earning 79.5% of perm. employees hourly rates)
- Work hours instability affects substantial part of workforce (Heisz & LaRouchelle-Cote, 2007)
- Firm closures/mass layoffs cause earnings loss especially for senior males (Morissette et al 2007)



A Short Profile of the Changing Canadian workforce *cont...*

- In March 2007 18.4% of Canadian labour force worked part-time
- Unemployment fell between 2000 & 2006 but rate remained 2.5 times higher amongst Aboriginals
- 2005 – 31.8 of workforce unionised (1981 – 38%)



What is Precarious Employment/ Contingent Work?

- Precariousness connotes insecurity, marginality
- Contingency connotes variable timing/spot purchase
- Overlapping concepts (former favoured in Europe, latter in North America) but former is broader
- Other 'markers' of precariousness:
 - Low or variable income (bifurcated)
 - Short or very long hours (bifurcated)
 - Multiple jobholding
 - Less likely to be unionised



What is Precarious Employment/ Contingent Work *cont...*

- Types of work viewed as precarious:
 - Temporary, on-call, casual work & day labour
 - Fixed term contract work
 - Dependent self-employed (subcontractors, small business)
 - Agency/leased work
 - Home-based work

- Disputed categories:
 - Ongoing part-time work - contingent not precarious?
 - Small business



Extent of Contingent Work/ Precarious Employment

- Australia – over 40% of workforce temporary or self-employed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006)
- Canada – 27.3% of workforce held temporary job or self-employed (Statistics Canada)
- United States – 31% of workforce contingent (42.6 million – US Government Accountability Office, 2006)



Overall: Useful Concept Capturing Changes to Work but Has Limitations

- Categories have been validated by research in some countries but more needed here
- Inconsistent international use of terms (eg casual work)
- Categories don't capture relational effects:
 - Permanent workers experience job insecurity
 - Perm. part-time workers experience contingency
 - Spillover effects (need longitudinal studies)



International Review of Studies of OH&S Effects of Work Changes

- 106 publications filtered from 188 for quality (refereed, clear data, robust method) & no double-counting
- Studies by country (USA 30; UK 14; Sweden 13; Canada 11; Aus 9; France 7; Finland 6; Denmark 5; Germany 3)
- Studies by industry (manufacturing 22, health 16, public sector 12, transport 6, mining 6, retail 4, construction 4, other services 7)



International Review of Studies of OH&S Effects of Change

- Studies by method (secondary data analysis 19, longitudinal 18, cross sectional 32 and qualitative 11)
- Studies by indices (subjective health measures 62, objective health measures 32, injury measures 20, OHS law compliance/awareness 11 and perceived risk 5)



Research Review Findings

Work Change	Adverse Effect	Mixed Effect	Positive Effect	No Effect
Downsizing/ restructuring	53 (87%)	3 (5%)	1 (1.6%)	4 (6.5%)
Outsourcing/ home-work	22 (95%)	1 (5%)	0	0
Temporary work	15 (68%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	1 (4.5%)
Total	91 (86%)	8 (7.5%)	3 (2.8%)	5 (4.7%)



Some Observations

- Small business – most studies found worse OHS outcomes similar to those just mentioned
- Ongoing/permanent part-time work (few studies but majority find nil or positive health effects although few look at injuries)



Some Observations *cont...*

- Evidence strong/consistent over time, no affect of method/location/indices
- Other reviews similar (Benach, Muntaner et al)
- Workers compensation data trends suggest improvement but sectoral shifts & significant non-reporting



Adverse Safety & Health Effects

- Increased injury rates (exposure weighting)
- Increased poor health indices (eg CVD)
- Increased hazard exposures (subcontractors)
- Effects on mental health (stress, GHQ)



Adverse Safety & Health Effects *cont...*

- Worse work/life balance outcomes
- Some evidence (occupational violence, burnout)
- Breaches of safe work practice/weakened OHS management
- Non-compliance with legislation (routine and high hazard risks)



Why the Adverse Effects?

- Demand/control imbalance – job strain model
- Effort/reward imbalance
- Employment strain model
- Three factor model:
 - Effort/reward pressures
 - Disorganisation
 - Regulatory failure



Implications for Social and Health Policies

- Shifts work/unemployment health offsets and health costs of intermittent work
- Externalities in healthcare, training, transport safety/security, environment & food standards
- Cost shifts in protection regimes (eg workers comp to social security) and to state/community



Implications for Social and Health Policies *cont...*

- Exposure reporting, access, treatment problems
- Worker voice and minimum labour standards
- Pensions, education, poverty and social capital



Specific Challenges: Is Contingent Work Gender/Family Friendly?

- Clear OHS protocols (eg home-based work)
- Unpredictable and split shifts
- Adequate/accessible childcare
- Work/non-work demand imbalance (presenteeism)
- Gender breakdown of precarious employment



Specific Challenges : Flexible Work and Aging

- Post retire work and graduated exit options but:
 - Job/income security vital to budget, family, retirement planning
 - Increased work intensity-burnout and premature retirement
 - Need to modify 'fitness for work' models/ parameters
 - Recalibrate hazard exposure limits (longer hours)
 - Retrenched older workers find it harder to get jobs



Specific Challenges: Other Vulnerable Groups

- Young workers concentrated in temporary and part-time jobs and less regulated service sector (small business and homes)
- Newly arrived, refugee, illegal immigrants and temporary visa residents/guestworkers
- Indigenous workers in seasonal tasks
- Seasonal declining industries (eg cod)



Implications for OHS Legal Regimes

■ Coverage:

- Who is who and who has obligations?
- Multiplicity and obligations
- Safe systems of work & OHSMS
- Worker awareness/access

■ Inspection/enforcement:

- Guidance material
- Resources and logistics



Implications for Workers' Compensation Legal Regimes

- Coverage:
 - Who has cover and who pays?
 - Who has cover but doesn't claim?
 - Determining income support
 - Rehabilitation and return to work
- Inspection/enforcement:
 - Premium manipulation/avoidance
 - Targeting risk/systems viability



Implications for Employers and OHS practitioners

- Difficulties managing contingent workforce:
 - Identifying risks/poor communication
 - Logistics of induction, training, supervision
 - Flexible work/flexible commitment?
 - Fractured OHS management systems
 - Competitive pressure/race to the bottom



Implications for Employers and OHS Practitioners *cont...*

- Will older workers 'survive' intense work regimes even if jobs are more flexible?
- How small business rehabilitate injured workers?
- Outsourcing of OHS management and occupational health services



Implications for Unions and Community Groups

- Recruiting/representing contingent workers?
- How to negotiate OHS of workplace change?
- How to lobby governments/changes to seek?
- Identifying collaborative approaches
- How to deal with government inspectorates?



Policy Responses: Government

- Revise OH&S laws (duties, codes and access)
- Revise workers compensation laws (cover, premiums, access/entitlements, return to work)
- Inspectorate logistics and compliance strategies



Policy Responses: Government *cont...*

- Integrated labour standards
- Supply chain regulation/procurement policies
- Evaluate policy impacts and externalities



Employer Responses/Risk Minimisation

- Prior risk assessment/costing and remedies (training, supervision, controls)
- Expect/plan for additional hazards
- Involve contractors, etc. in OHSM



Employer Responses/ Risk Minimisation *cont...*

- Strategic balance in workforce composition
- Preferred subcontractors
- If major contractor 'take control'



Union Responses

- OHS as core business (build evidence and expertise as well as advocacy)
- Collaborate, negotiate, publicize and lobby at once
- Build links with inspectorates
- Look to international success models (exchange information)



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Thank You

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