

**Extending working life and health
Policy Seminar, Tuesday 2 June 2015, London.**

Abstracts

Presentation 1: Working longer: paid employment beyond age 65 years.

Abstract: At present, among British people aged 65-69 years, some one-in-five men and one-in-ten women are in paid employment or self-employed; proportions which are among the highest in Europe. Within mainland Europe such employees mostly are working fulltime with permanent contracts in low stress jobs; and those changing jobs in their mid-60s tend to find new employment in the lower paid parts of either the non-manual or manual sectors of the economy. Raising the state pension age, first to 65 years for women, then to 68 for all, will shift a present minority practice into a normative expectation on all. With what effect? Can present circumstances be used as a guide to the future? Almost certainly not. The change in state pension age will bring a big challenge for occupational health.

Speaker: David Blane is Professor emeritus of Imperial College London and Professorial research associate of University College London. Formerly (2008-2012) he was deputy director of ESRC International Centre for Life Course Studies in Society and Health (ICLS).

Presentation 2: Who works beyond the state pension age and are there health benefits?

Abstract: The relationships between work, retirement and health in later life are complex and much of the evidence base examines early retirement. In the context of extending working lives in the UK, we use data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing to examine work beyond the state pension age (SPA) to better understand who is 'extending' their working life, how employment beyond SPA is related to prior labour market experiences, and the implications of post-SPA work for health. We find gender differences in the predictors of working beyond SPA but good health is important for both men and women. Working beyond SPA is associated with positive evaluations of health; however, it is only the healthiest who continue in paid employment.

Speaker: Giorgio Di Gessa completed his PhD in Demography at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and is currently a Research Associate with the Wellbeing, Health, Retirement and the Lifecourse project, one of the Extending Working Lives Consortia Grants funded by the ESRC and MRC. He is examining the relationships over time between paid work up to and beyond State Pension Age, and mental and physical health.

Presentation 3: The impact of working beyond state pension age on volunteering, caregiving and well-being.

Abstract: The State Pension Age (SPA) is currently increasing, and this talk considers the potential effects this may have on the opportunities for older people to participate in both voluntary work and caring duties. Previous research suggests engaging in voluntary work has beneficial effects on both the mental and social wellbeing of older people, and involvement in both volunteering and caregiving duties are commonly referenced incentives to exit the workforce, as well as activities in which the individual is likely to participate alongside the working role as retirement age nears.

Previous research demonstrates the wellbeing of older adults is significantly impacted by the environment in which social roles are participated within, with poorly reciprocated roles associated with lower wellbeing than those for which the individual feels adequately rewarded and appreciated. These findings have been shown to exist within employment, volunteering and caregiving.

Using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), the first part of this research considers how retiring at older ages might impact on the individual's ability to participate in these important social roles in later life, as well as whether the working environment of the individual might further affect this. The second part of the research focuses on wellbeing and asks whether participation in multiple roles among those retiring at older ages differs when compared to men retiring at 65 and women retiring at 60. Again, the potential impact of the working environment will be considered, as well as whether or not individuals feel adequately appreciated for the volunteering or caregiving roles they simultaneously provide.

Speaker: Katey Mathews is a Research Associate, Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research, Manchester University.

Presentation 4: Geographic inequalities, health and exit from the work force.

Retention of older workers in the work force is not distributed equally across the United Kingdom. We used data from Office for National Statistics Longitudinal Study (LS) members (98,756), a 1% sample of the English and Welsh census, who were aged 40-69 years and working in 2001 to assess whether local area unemployment was a predictor of exit from the work-force due to disablement or retirement from 2001-2011, and whether associations could be explained by the individual distribution of self-rated health. Findings indicated that strategies to retain older workers may be most effective if they additionally target areas of high unemployment. For persons in ill health, solely labour market interventions will not be efficient in reducing their exit from the work force.

Speaker: Dr Emily Murray is Senior Research Associate at University College London for the Research on Extending Working Lives (renEWL) consortium. Her current research interests include how individual and area-based characteristics across the life course interact to produce inequities later in life.