



Impact of Job Strain and Long Work Hours on Suicidal Ideation

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Job strain and long work hours may be associated with suicidal ideation among middle-aged U.S. workers.

Researchers used data on 578 workers ages 34 to 69 from the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States. Workers reported on suicidal ideation at two different time points—baseline and a median interval of 26 months later. They also answered questions about psychosocial work conditions, including job control, psychological demands, supervisor and coworker support, working hours, job insecurity, and ongoing work stress.

Job strain, defined as low control and high demands, was significantly associated with suicidal ideation. Long work hours, defined as working 49 to 56 hours per week, was also significantly associated with suicidal ideation. The relationship between job strain, long work hours, and suicidal ideation persisted even after controlling for age, marital status, race, family history of suicide, and other work stressors.

Existing workplace interventions for suicide prevention mainly focus on detecting those at risk and referring them to mental health services. While those secondary or tertiary prevention approaches are important, they may not sufficiently address the factors contributing to workers' suicidal ideation. Establishing a healthy workplace culture by addressing work-related stressors could be another important prevention strategy.

Choi, B. (2018). Job strain, long work hours, and suicidal ideation in U.S. workers: A longitudinal study. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, 91(7), 865–875.

Settings: Workplaces

About Suicide: Suicidal Thoughts and Behavior, Ideation, Risk and Protective Factors

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