

Health inequalities between immigrant and native workers in Spain: influence of occupational conditions.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Background:

There is evidence that exist health inequalities related to the migrant status. Also it has been stated that immigrant workers are more likely to be exposed to adverse working and employment conditions. It is unknown how much influence the occupational conditions have in these inequalities. The aim of this study was to examine the differences in self-perceived health and mental health between immigrant and native workers in Spain to assess the contribution to the relationship of the occupational conditions.

Methods:

Data used comes from the Spanish National Health Survey 2011/12 (n=8578 employed workers: 7815 natives, 763 immigrants).

We analyzed self-perceived and mental health, and considered physical load, stress, satisfaction and employment conditions.

We calculated odds ratio with 95% confidence interval (adjusted-OR_{95%CI}) using multivariate logistic regression, adjusted for age and social class, for each sex. Explicative Fractions (EF) were calculated to estimate the influence of each occupational indicator. Immigrant was defined as a worker born in a foreign low-income country.

Results:

We found increased likelihood of poor self-perceived health for immigrant women (adjusted-OR=1.60_{95%CI}=1.23-2.08). The greatest influence of occupational indicators were job satisfaction (EF: 0.1), followed by employment relationship (EF: 0.04), stress (EF: 0.01) and physical load (EF: 0.01). All working conditions together explained 7%.

Increased likelihood of poor mental health for immigrant women (adjusted-OR=1.44_{95%CI}=1.11-1.87). The greatest influence of occupational indicators was job satisfaction (EF: 0.5), and physical load (EF: 0.02).

We did not find statistically significant differences in both health indicators for men.

Conclusions:

In Spain there are health inequalities between natives and immigrants workers. Job satisfaction is the occupational indicator that most explains in women.

Contrary to expectations, exposure to adverse occupational conditions did not appear to explain much of the increased risk for poor self-perceived and mental health found among migrants workers in this study.