

Challenges of Digital Transition – Addressing Worker's Mental Health and Well-Being

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Abstract

The interconnectivity between (public) health and occupational safety and health (OSH) has become widely advocated by policymakers and academics in the post-pandemic period stressing the occupational risks and working

conditions as factors that could significantly contribute to the understanding of population health. Digitalization of the economy and society and always-on work culture further exacerbated new, emergency risks to workers' health, especially mental well-being, calling for novel approaches, actions, and measures to increase the synergy between OSH and (public) health fields. Additionally, the exposure to new, emergency risks i.e. psychosocial risks is emphasized for some workers' groups, where healthcare professionals are highly vulnerable considering risks of workload, long working hours, and disbalance between work and private life.

Mental health issues are generally neglected in the legislation among EU countries considering that there is no EU legal framework that deals with psychosocial risks at the workplaces related to mental health. However, preventive and protective measures are mainly addressed in national labour legislation (Labour codes and OSH acts) and, national health strategies that are not-binding instruments. All mentioned call for an evolved approach to mental health concerns in the digital era, comprising both fields – health, and OSH to work together in the recognition and management of psychosocial risks. The paper aims to give insights regarding the current state and perspectives of the development of mental health legislation in the workplace by applying legal normative and comparative methods while conceptualizing the theoretical framework of workers' mental health rights and the mental health vulnerability approach.