

For further information refer to:

Fondazione G. Brodolini

Via Goito, 39 - 00185 Rome

Tel. +39 06/44249625 Fax: +39 06/44249565

economialavoro@fondazionebrodolini.it

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Abstracts

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE. THE VALUE OF DATA IN A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK, AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Silvia D'Amario

The recent 2019 reforms of the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL), concerning both firms and workers, are the result of the changes that have occurred over recent decades in production systems, the world of work, and risk patterns. In the context of ongoing transformation processes, INAIL continues to manage and assess these changes, which – if not adequately monitored – may have negative impacts not only on the quality of working conditions, but also on the levels of health and safety protection in the workplace.

With this goal, the analysis of data on injury events represents a prerequisite for identifying the areas of risk that require priority action and for managing both longstanding and emerging risks. It is important to acknowledge that the transformations that have taken place in the labour market over recent decades, together with the evolution of preventive legislation, have significantly influenced trends not only in occupational injuries but also in occupational diseases.

Keywords: INAIL, occupational injuries, occupational diseases, workplace safety, risks.

INJURIES WHILE WORKING, BUT WITHOUT PROTECTION. NEW EVIDENCE ON THE UNDER-COVERAGE AND UNDERREPORTING OF WORKPLACE INJURIES IN ITALY

Roberto Leombruni, Sonia Della Monica

This study examines gaps in insurance coverage and injury reporting in Italy, phenomena that render a significant number of work injuries “invisible” to official statistics. Using the WHIP-Salute database, which integrates data from the Italian National Social Security Institute (INPS), the Italian National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL), and Hospital Discharge Records, we propose an empirical strategy to detect workplace injuries that are not captured by traditional administrative data sources. Specifically, we compare hospitalisation rates for traumatic injuries with INAIL records across different categories of workers (employees, quasi-dependent workers, and freelancers) over the period 2001-19. Results show that underreporting also affects severe injuries and that large segments of self-employed and atypical workers lack insurance coverage, with particularly striking disparities in road traffic injuries, which are now one of the leading causes of work-related deaths. Finally, the study highlights the limitations of a categorical system based on a closed list of employment types covered by workers’ compensation insurance, and calls for a reform extending protection to all forms of work regardless of the legal classification of the employment relationship.

Keywords: workplace injuries, under-coverage, underreporting, road accidents.

EXTENDING WORKING LIFE: A CHALLENGE FOR HEALTH, THE LABOUR MARKET, AND INEQUALITY

Chiara Ardito

In response to rising life expectancy and growing concerns about the financial sustainability of public pension systems, many European countries have introduced reforms aimed at delaying retirement. While these reforms are justified on actuarial and fiscal grounds, they risk overlooking the unequal effects on different population groups. This paper focuses on the Italian case, and provides a non-systematic narrative review of national and international empirical evidence to examine the health, labour market, and distributive consequences of increasing retirement age.

The evidence reviewed shows that such reforms can unintentionally worsen health outcomes, exacerbate socio-economic disparities, and increase welfare dependency and labour market exclusion, particularly among more vulnerable workers – often shifting costs from pension systems to other branches of the welfare state. They may also lead to regressive redistribution, benefitting higher-paid and longer-lived individuals. These effects are further shaped by gender, reflecting disparities in caregiving responsibilities and fragmented career paths. Finally, we discuss policy options that could reconcile fiscal sustainability with social equity and individual well-being.

Keywords: pension reforms, retirement age, ageing, health inequalities, vulnerable workers, gender, informal caring, Italy, welfare and sustainability.

IMMIGRATION AND WORKPLACE SAFETY IN WESTERN EUROPE

Annamaria Nese, Luigi Aldieri

This study examines workplace safety for immigrants and natives in 12 Western European countries, using data from the 2014 Labour Force Survey (LFS) *ad hoc* module. The work considers physical workload, exposure to psychosocial stress, and contact with carcinogenic agents in the workplace. The results indicate that immigrants are more likely to accept jobs with greater health risks; immigrant-native gaps are attenuated in low-skilled sectors but accentuated in skilled occupations. Immigrants who arrived as children in the host country show no significant differences from natives. However, persistent disadvantages for individuals from developing countries suggest discriminatory mechanisms. Entry modes into the host country significantly affect working conditions. Asylum seekers, in fact, face the most challenging situations, while the lack of recognition of professional qualifications, and insufficient language skills constitute the main obstacles to integration. Overall, our findings support a multidimensional interpretation of labour market inequalities involving individual, institutional, and structural factors.

Keywords: workplace safety, immigrant labour market integration, occupational risk inequalities.

AUTOMATION AND HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS (HSW): EVIDENCE FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

Marco De Simone

This paper provides a review of the economic and empirical literature on the relationship between automation technologies – robots and artificial intelligence (AI) – and health and safety of workers (HSW). This work aims to achieve two main goals: a) to analyse the effects of automation on workers' physical safety and mental health, and b) to identify the main gaps in existing studies. Automation has a dual effect on HSW. On the one hand, it can reduce the number of accidents and fatalities. On the other hand, it can have a detrimental effect on workers' mental health. Finally, three main gaps are identified: a) a lack of studies on the European context; b) insufficient attention to sectoral differences; and c) differences between countries in terms of labour institutions.

Keywords: automation, robots, artificial intelligence, management algorithms, labour market, occupational health and safety, work-related stress.

WORK-RELATED STRESS IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT: A CRITICAL REFLECTION BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Annalisa Cristini, Massimiliano Barattucci, Luca Carollo, Marta Pantalone, Antonella Verduci

This article examines work-related stress (WRS) in the academic context, highlighting the specific macro and micro-level factors that make the university sector particularly exposed to certain psychosocial risks. In the light of the regulatory, organisational, and social changes that have taken place over the past two decades, the article shows how these transformations have affected university workers – faculty, researchers, and technical-administrative staff – in different ways. The article is presented as a review aimed at comparing findings emerging from the most recent international literature on WRS in universities with the methodologies and practices currently used for its assessment. The paper discusses the critical issues and limitations of the INAIL methodology currently adopted in Italy, emphasising the need for tools that are more sensitive to the complexity of the university work environment and for integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to identify specific WRS risk indicators capable of guiding more effective organisational and institutional interventions.

Keywords: work-related stress, university, INAIL methodology, academy.

INEQUALITIES IN THE OUTCOMES OF A WORKPLACE ACCIDENT: COMPENSATION, JOB INSECURITY, RECOVERY TIME, AND LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

Monica Galizzi, Roberto Leombruni, Lia Pacelli

The central theme of this essay, which encompasses three published papers, is the investigation of the determinants of inequality in the outcomes of workplace incidents – specifically in terms of health, employment, and income. Our findings show not only that individuals face different probabilities of experiencing incidents of varying severity, but also that the consequences – such as the likelihood of full recovery, continued employment, maintenance of previous income levels, and access to compensation – differ significantly. These disparities are shaped by how “strong” workers are in the labour market and by the degree of protection afforded by institutional frameworks, underscoring an important factor behind the rise of inequality in Italy in recent decades.

Keywords: workplace incidents, inequality, return to work, compensation, income, employment protection.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY BETWEEN REPORTING AND REFORM: INSIGHTS ON INNOVATION, INSTITUTIONS, AND POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

Alessia Marrocco, Angelo Castaldo, Maria Alessandra Antonelli, Gabriele D'Amore

This paper synthesises the rationale, findings, and policy implications of four interconnected studies conducted over the past four years. The research examines Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) policy through the ISI funding programme of the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL), interpreted as an innovation-oriented public intervention. Moving beyond a narrow view of innovation as the adoption of new technologies, we adopt a systemic perspective linking OSH outcomes to institutional capacity, policy design, and firm-level dynamics. The analysis develops in four stages. First, we explore the relationship between the efficiency of National Innovation Systems and fatal workplace injuries at European level by using stochastic frontier analysis. Second, we analyse subnational disparities in reported workplace injuries across Italian provinces, employing severity-differentiated indicators to address underreporting. Third and fourth, we assess the causal impact of ISI grants on workplace accidents and firm survival, drawing on administrative data, matching methods, and a quasi-experimental selection framework. Overall, the findings highlight the need to embed OSH objectives within broader innovation and territorial policies, strengthening institutional effectiveness. In this context, incentive-based programmes like ISI can complement regulation, and support more balanced, innovation-driven approaches to workplace safety.

Keywords: occupational safety and health, innovation policy, workplace accidents, firm survival, National Innovation Systems, causal impact evaluation, INAIL ISI programme.

KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: ANALYSIS OF RECENT ANTI-POVERTY POLICIES

Valerio Gugliotta

This article examines the recent anti-poverty policies introduced in Italy – the Inclusion Allowance (*Assegno di inclusione*, ADI) and the Support for Training and Work (*Supporto per la formazione e il lavoro*, SFL) –, which have been implemented as replacements for the previous measure, the Citizenship Income (*Reddito di cittadinanza*, RdC). In line with the EU's social vision and the European Pillar of Social Rights, the focus is placed on the educational and training dimension of these two policies, with the aim of assessing whether they are effective in addressing some of the weaknesses identified in RdC, particularly in terms of investment in skills and training. To provide a more in-depth understanding, the study adopts a localised perspective. First, it examines the educational levels and training needs of a specific target group – “young adults” – through a survey conducted among navigators. Subsequently, the focus is shifted to the training offer, analysing the availability of educational and vocational training pathways in the area, based on a detailed documentary review of regional training catalogues of the Sicily Region. This territorial approach makes it possible to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats arising from the transition from RdC to ADI and SFL.

Keywords: social inclusion, human capital, knowledge resources, active labour market policies, vocational education and training, guaranteed minimum income.

STREET UNIONISM, CIRCULAR SUBSIDIARITY, COLLECTIVISING SERVICES: ROOTS AND CHALLENGES FOR LABOUR REPRESENTATION IN THE FUTURE

Francesco Lauria

This article provides a reflection on the organisational and strategic dimensions of trade unions within the context of the labour market and industrial relations. It addresses the notion of “street unionism”, the long-standing issue of work organisation of the “powerless”, and the issue of subsidiarity – particularly circular subsidiarity – in relation to changes in welfare systems, and of the evolving role of social and representative actors. The article then provides an in-depth analysis of the development of the organisational model of the Italian Confederation of Trades Unions (CISL), in connection with changes in the scale and forms of trade union representation. Finally, it examines the challenges facing labour representation, with particular attention to so-called “collectivising services” and with reference to new trends in North American trade unionism, especially worker-to-worker unionisation.

Keywords: trade union, representation, welfare, circular subsidiarity, trade union organising, community personalism, collectivising services, industrial relations, Alinsky, Maritain.