Work, family and mental health: A gender-based comparative study

Title of the project: Work, family and mental health: A gender-based comparative study

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Problem Statement. Mental health problems related to psychological distress, depression, and burnout have assumed major proportions among the workforce. Epidemiological studies suggest that more women than men are affected by these problems. The research literature, however, offers no definitive explanation for these male-female divergences. Objectives. This research project will attempt (1) to explain how differences between men and women arise when the work-family interface functions as mental health determinant, and (2) to examine the impact of organizational context, particularly policies intended to balance work-family responsibilities. This research project proposes to analyze (1) how of male-female differences associated with work and family affect mental health; (2) how men and women experience stressors in the workplace and the family; (3) how gender-related specificities characterize the overall stress process, particularly those arising from the work-family balance; (4) how psychological distress, depression, and burnout associated with the overall stress process vary between men and women; and (5) what effects company policies designed to facilitate balancing work-family responsibilities have on mental health by gender. Methodology. Data from the SALVEO study conducted by the Research Team on Work and Mental Health (RTWMH) were derived from a sample of 2162 workers (49% women) employed by 63 Québec companies. The application of multilevel regression models and multilevel models of causal paths will allow evaluating male-female differences. Outcomes. The results anticipated from the proposed study will shed light on the social etiology of mental health problems among men and women and will eventually make it possible to devise company policies that take specific needs and circumstances into account.

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