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Journal articles marked with an asterisk indicate an IWH scientist or adjunct scientist is included in the list of authors.

**Bailey N and Winchester N. Sensemaking, inequity and agency in a precarious transnational workspace: the case of international seafarers. *Industrial Relations Journal*. 2026; 57(2):160-169. <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.70022> [open access]**

Abstract: ABSTRACT International seafarers are highly trained and certificated workers but are subject to precaritising working conditions. This affects how they understand and respond to perceived inequities in relation to terms and conditions of employment. Drawing on qualitative interview data, this article examines how this group of workers make sense, rationalise and cope with precarious working conditions. In so doing, it: (i) highlights a range of inequities in seafarer terms and conditions of employment; (ii) examines how seafarers make sense of, and respond to, these inequities within a precaritising work context; and (iii) argues that seafarers adopt a pragmatic context-sensitive approach that allows them to flex between different modes of understanding (i.e., framings) in a manner that is individualised, rational and preserves their sense of agency

**Buscema F, Viola M, Cricenti C, Lorente Prieto L, and Colombo L. Job resources and perceived work capability at sea: the mediator role of seafarers' sleep quality. *Safety Science*. 2026; 196:107089. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2025.107089> [open access]**

Abstract: The maritime sector has received little attention in research on analysing working conditions and employee well-being. This study investigates the relationship between job resources (i.e. safety behaviour, social support, transformational leadership) and work self-capability among seafarers, analysing the mediating role of sleep quality. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 406 Italian seafarers employed by various companies. Structural equation models revealed that safety behaviour was directly and strongly associated with work self-capability, whereas social support and

transformational leadership showed no direct effects. However, sleep quality fully mediated the relationship between social support and self-work capability. The results highlight the central role of on board safety behaviour in promoting effective for decent work performance compared to other work resources. Moreover, they underscore the importance of sleep quality as a mechanism through which social support enhances performance. This study adds to the international literature by emphasizing the critical role of an onboard safety climate in predicting positive work-related outcomes among seafarers. To enhance operational performance and promote crew well-being, shipping companies are encouraged to focus on developing a strong safety culture and fostering supportive relationships among crew members.

**Dawit E, Naeem S, Vinegar S, Styles L, and Jones RM. Attitudes of fire service personnel toward respiratory protection in wildland firefighting. *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*. 2026; 70(2):wxaf07.**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/annweh/wxaf077> [open access]

Abstract: Wildland and wildland-urban interface (W/WUI) fires are increasing in frequency and intensity, increasing concerns about firefighters' exposure to hazardous smoke and the need for respiratory protection. This qualitative study explored the perspectives of California fire service personnel on the use of respiratory protective devices (RPDs), particularly powered air-purifying respirators, and a potential Cal/OSHA regulation mandating their use in W/WUI firefighting. Participants were experienced in W/WUI firefighting and had some role in their fire department related to respiratory protection or other aspect of firefighter safety. While all participants recognized the health risks associated with smoke exposure, including cancer and acute respiratory symptoms, and that RPDs would reduce their exposures, participants had concerns that RPDs would negatively affect fatigue, comfort, communication, mobility, and situational awareness. Some concerns specifically relate to the design of the RPDs. Most participants supported using RPDs in specific scenarios such as mop-up and prescribed burns, but fewer supported RPD use during high-exertion tasks like cutting line. Participants preferred flexibility or guidance rather than prescriptive regulation and advocated for engagement of firefighters in the development of any potential regulation to ensure practicality and feasibility. Some participants acknowledged resistance to change in the industry as a barrier for RPD adoption, but felt that evidence of RPD effectiveness and usability, including opportunities for training with devices and changes to device design, could assist with adoption. A programmatic regulation, coupled with education and engagement, can facilitate the incorporation of RPDs in W/WUI firefighting

**El-Helaly M, El-Sayed Awaad A, and Elhelaly AM. Artificial intelligence and mental health in the workplace: positive and negative impacts. *Archives of Environmental & Occupational Health*. 2026; 81(3-4):57-65.**

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19338244.2026.2623267>

Abstract: The mental health of workers is a crucial objective of occupational health and safety programs. Mental health issues in the workforce present a significant public and occupational health challenge, with considerable impacts on workers, families, employers, and society. Meanwhile, the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in various work environments prompts important questions regarding its impact on workers' mental well-being. AI can positively contribute to workplace mental health in various ways, including the early detection of fatigue, stress, and anxiety through wearable sensors. However, it also raises potential drawbacks, such as concerns about job displacement and job

insecurity. Therefore, this narrative review aims to provide a comprehensive review of existing literature to highlight the potential benefits and challenges associated with the adoption of AI in the workplace and its implications for mental health

**Guimaraes T, Antal M, and Lehmann B. Why and how workers choose less work for less money: a mixed-methods study on a working time reduction scheme in Germany. *Industrial Relations Journal*. 2026; 57(2):127-139.**

<https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.70018> [open access]

**Abstract:** ABSTRACT This study examines workers' motives for joining or rejecting a voluntary 28-h work-time reduction scheme in Germany. Using a mixed-methods design that combines semi-structured interviews and a survey of eligible employees, we analyse how personal, financial, and professional considerations shape decisions about shorter hours. Two main motivational categories emerge: a desire for greater work-life balance, and concerns about income loss and career impact. Findings highlight how uncertainty affects perceived opportunities and risks differently: even without clear time-use plans shorter hours can be chosen to increase autonomy, but they are rejected confidently to avoid professional or financial risks. This underlines the value of qualitative research with open-ended questions and the potential strategic relevance of latent desires to reduce hours among workers who are currently reluctant to consider such options

**Hedmer M, Loven K, Rex J, Nilsson CA, Polat M, Nojgaard JK, et al. Characterization of occupational exposure to air pollutants during asphalt milling and paving. *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*. 2026; 70(2):wxaf078.**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/annweh/wxaf078> [open access]

**Abstract:** Objectives: Asphalt is frequently used as road pavement and consists of bitumen as a binder, and fillers. Bitumen consists of a complex mixture of hydrocarbons, where a minor component is polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Many PAHs are classified as carcinogenic to humans. Bitumen fumes from road paving have been classified as possibly carcinogenic. Paving and milling are open processes generating asphalt fumes, mechanically generated dust particulate matter and diesel exhaust, which the asphalt workers are exposed to. Ultrafine particles (UFPs) are present in both asphalt fumes and diesel exhaust. The aim was to characterize occupational exposure of milling and road paving with a novel multi-metric approach by using real-time monitors and offline methods. Additional aims were to monitor asphalt workers' skin contamination of PAHs by skin wiping, and to biologically monitor their systemic exposure to PAH in urine. Methods: Personal exposure measurements of lung deposited surface area (LDSA), particle number concentration (PNC), particulate mass (PM<sub>0.3</sub>), average particle size, organic carbon (OC), elemental carbon (EC), equivalent black carbon, 16 US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) PAHs, and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) were performed on millers and pavers in a field study. Skin wipe samples (palm) and urine samples were collected before and after workshifts and were analysed for PAH and PAH metabolites, respectively. Repeated self-administered samplings of 16 US EPA PAHs and NO<sub>2</sub> were performed twice by the millers and pavers. Results: The pavers had the highest average exposure to all exposure metrics, except for OC and NO<sub>2</sub>. Their geometric mean (GM) exposures to PNC and LDSA were 31,000/cm<sup>3</sup> and 80 μm<sup>2</sup>/cm<sup>3</sup>, respectively. The GM exposure to 16 US EPA PAHs, OC, EC, and NO<sub>2</sub> were 0.29, 21, 0.75, and 31 μg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively. The millers' GM exposures to PNC and LDSA were 29,000/cm<sup>3</sup> and 67 μm<sup>2</sup>/cm<sup>3</sup>, respectively. Their GM exposure to 16 US EPA PAHs, OC, EC, and NO<sub>2</sub> were 0.053, 40, 0.40, and 83 μg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively. The self-administrated

sampling of 16 US EPA PAH and NO<sub>2</sub> showed that the exposures were in the same range as in the field study, increasing the validity of the results. Pavers showed significantly higher levels of PAH on the palm after the workshift compared with millers. Millers showed higher levels of benzo[a]pyrene on their palm after the workshift compared with pavers. The urinary levels of PAH metabolites were significantly increased in pavers after the workshift. Conclusions: This study showed that millers and pavers were exposed to airborne 16 US EPA PAHs, UFPs, OC, and diesel exhaust. With a study design that involved repeated exposure measurements for each participant, more accurate exposure characterization and assessment of PAHs and NO<sub>2</sub> were obtained. By using portable aerosol monitors, valuable exposure data for novel metrics, including UFPs, could be obtained. Operators of, eg, rollers and milling machines were exposed to multiple peak exposures during the workshift. Millers were exposed to somewhat elevated levels of the carcinogenic particulate PAHs. As biomonitoring generally is measuring metabolites of gaseous and intermediate molecular mass PAHs, particulate PAH exposure could not be detected. Air and skin exposure measurements were vital in order to detect this exposure. Recommendations for reducing occupational exposure are proposed.

**Kunas B and Laireiter AR. Integration of wearables in mobile health interventions for occupational stress management: a systematic review of the development of the field. *International Journal of Stress Management*. 2026; 33(1):67-80.**

<https://doi.org/10.1037/str0000383>

**Liu Y, Ye G, Xiang Q, and Wang S. How do workers decide to work safely? Mechanisms of occupational safety decision-making failure. *Safety Science*. 2026; 198:107144.**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2026.107144>

**Lukes M, Zouhar J, and Bennis WM. The influence of coworking on well-being and performance: an Experience Sampling Method study. *Ergonomics*. 2026; 69(4):591-604.**

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00140139.2025.2473019> [open access]

Abstract: Remote work from coworking spaces developed as an alternative to remote work from home, aiming to retain its benefits while overcoming its costs. There are reasons to question whether work from coworking spaces delivers on these aims, however. The current study uses the Experience Sampling Method to explore within-participant differences in well-being, work engagement, and productivity among remote workers, depending on (1) whether they are working from home or from a community-based coworking space, and - when working from a coworking space - (2) whether they work in a shared space and (3) whether the work is collaborative. Results suggest that coworking promotes higher outcomes on all measures relative to working from home. Within the coworking space, the impact of other people in the room and of collaboration is mixed, suggesting distinct strategies for how to best use a coworking space depending on the activity

**Moller SA, Frederiksen MW, Rasmussen PU, Muthalagu A, Kofoed VC, and Madsen AM. Occupational exposure to microorganisms for operators of jet-vac trucks. *Archives of Environmental & Occupational Health*. 2026; 81(1-2):13-25.**

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19338244.2025.2608687>

Abstract: This study examines bioaerosol exposure and associated biomarker levels in combination vacuum-jet truck ("jet-vac") operators servicing the sewer network in Denmark. Personal exposures (n = 42) and end-of-shift serum samples (n = 30) were collected from 28 workers across four exposure

groups: "Stormwater," "Wastewater," "Combined," and "Other" (non-sewage related work). Geometric means of bacterial and fungal exposure levels were 938 and 301 colony forming units per cubic meter of air (CFU/m<sup>3</sup>), respectively. "Stormwater" workers had significantly higher serum amyloid A (SAA) levels than the "Other" group ( $p = 0.019$ ). SAA was negatively associated with endotoxin exposure ( $p = 0.014$ ) across exposure groups. Community compositions differed between exposure groups. Micrococcus was the most abundant bacterial genus in the "Other" and "Wastewater" groups, while Bacillus was the most abundant genus in the "Stormwater" and "Combined" group. Five known human pathogens were identified, including Aspergillus fumigatus and Clostridium perfringens. This first study of jet-vac operators highlights the need for further research on bioaerosol exposures in a larger cohort of workers.

**Perera E, Afifi TO, Enns MW, Mota N, Sareen J, and Bolton SL. Disorder-specific risk factors of suicidal behaviour among serving and veteran Canadian Armed Forces Members with baseline mental health diagnoses. Canadian Journal of Public Health. 2026; 117(1):62-73.**

<https://doi.org/10.17269/s41997-025-01054-0> [open access]

**Abstract:** Objectives: Many Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and veterans will receive a mental disorder diagnosis, and a high percentage will also experience suicidal behaviours. This study examined demographic characteristics, distal and proximal risk factors, and protective factors, and their relationship to suicidal behaviour (ideation, plans, and attempts) among CAF members and veterans who met criteria for a mental disorder at baseline. Methods: Data from the 2018 CAF Members and Veterans Mental Health Follow-up Survey ( $n = 2941$ ) were utilized. Mental disorder diagnoses were assessed through structured diagnostic interview. Generalized linear models were conducted using subsamples of individuals with a lifetime baseline diagnosis of (a) major depressive episode (MDE), (b) posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and (c) an anxiety disorder (AD; social phobia, generalized, panic). Results: Across mental disorder subsamples of those with MDE and AD, land environmental command at baseline was associated with increased prevalence of suicidal behaviour. Risk factors for suicidal behaviour across all subsamples included baseline suicidal behaviour, greater level of self-medication and avoidant coping style, greater level of baseline work stress, greater number of traumatic experiences, persistence or recurrence of index mental disorder, current comorbid mental disorder, current physical health condition, exposure to "other" traumatic experiences, and alcohol use disorder. Protective factors across all subsamples included greater level of current problem-solving coping style. Disorder-specific factors were also identified. Conclusion: This study identified characteristics of individuals living with mental disorders who might be at high risk of suicidal behaviour, highlighting potential areas for targeted interventions in this key population.

**Ropponen A, Hirvonen M, Poutanen J, Saynajakangas P, and Haukka E. Working hour characteristics and risk of occupational accidents: a case-crossover study of the retail sector. Safety and Health at Work. 2026; 17(1):64-69.**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shaw.2025.11.002> [open access]

**Abstract:** BACKGROUND: The purpose was to investigate the association between the working hour characteristics of irregular working hours and the first incident occupational accident in the retail sector. METHODS: Employer-owned register data of daily working hours and the first incident occupational accidents in 2021–2023 were used. The final sample of 470 employees was analyzed using a case-crossover design to obtain odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) for the seven-day periods of working hours preceding the accidents. RESULTS: The weekly working hours (OR: 1.02–1.03,

95% CI: 1.00-1.08), shift length (OR: 10.12-12.47, 95% CI: 4.73- 32.9), and evening shifts (OR: 1.02, 95% CI: 1.01-1.04) were associated with an increased likelihood of occupational accidents among both part- and full-time employees. Early morning (OR: 1.03, 95% CI: 1.01-1.04) and morning (OR: 1.02, 95% CI: 1.01-1.03) shifts, and the percentage of short (<4 hour) shifts (OR: 1.06, 95% CI: 1.01-1.12) increased the likelihood of occupational accidents among part-time employees, and the number of consecutive work shifts (OR: 1.55, 95% CI: 1.04-2.30) among full-time employees. CONCLUSION: Working evenings and the length of work shifts, or weekly working hours, even for 7 days, were associated with an increased likelihood of occupational accidents among both part-time and full-time employees. Since early morning and morning shifts showed an increased risk among part-time employees, special attention should be paid to them. Thus, shift scheduling in the retail sector merits attention to regularity and avoidance of long or early shifts, supplemented with safety instructions to ensure the health and safety of employees

**Ryan L, Churchill B, and Ruppanner L. The gendered flexibility paradox and remote-first work: how working parents reconcile work and care. *Work, Employment and Society*. 2026; 40(2):203-224.**

<https://doi.org/10.1177/09500170251373035> [open access]

Abstract: Recent technological advances and globalised distribution of work have accelerated the rise of remote-first organisations where everyone works remotely, yet the effects of this approach on working parents remain underexplored. Drawing on qualitative interviews with 25 mothers and 16 fathers from 31 remote-first organisations, this study examines the gendered impact of standardised remote-first flexibility on work–family reconciliation. Findings show that remote-first work enhances location and schedule freedom, allowing parents to sustain a dual devotion to work and family. Fathers used this flexibility to increase engagement with domestic tasks and caregiving, while mothers focused on meeting work demands (in addition to caregiving responsibilities). The use of remote-first working arrangements increased employee trust and empathy among working parents, reducing flexibility stigma concerns. While fathers resisted tendencies to overwork, the remote-first model perpetuated the gendered flexibility paradox for mothers, leading to increased labour expansion and self-exploitation in both paid and unpaid work

**Shkembi A, Linhart E, Chou S, Couliantianos MJ, Adhvaryu A, Austin-Breneman J, et al. Enhancing informal workers' tools to reduce workplace injuries: a quasi-randomized control trial of electronic waste recyclers in Thailand. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health*. 2026; 52(2):139-146.**

<https://doi.org/10.5271/sjweh.4259> [open access]

Abstract: OBJECTIVES: In low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), there is mixed evidence on the effectiveness of interventions in improving workplace conditions among hazardous industries. In Thailand, a particularly hazardous industry with high injuries is informal electronic waste (e-waste) recycling. We investigated whether developing an optimized tool to dismantle e-waste would reduce injuries. METHODS: We conducted a quasi-randomized control trial to determine the perceptions and efficacy of the optimized tool in reducing worker injuries over three months among 89 workers. The optimized tool for dismantling e-waste was designed following employee and business owner input using conjoint analysis. Workers were quasi-randomized into an intervention (ie, receiving the tool) or control (ie, not receiving) group from an auction. We conducted differences-in-differences Poisson regression to examine differences in self-reported injuries and near misses over three months follow-up between the intervention and control groups. RESULTS: Among 44 workers who received the tool,

workers self-reported that the tool created a safer work environment and reduced near misses, hammer danger, hand vibrations and hand pain. Among 42 workers (21 treatments, 21 controls) with complete information, the intervention reduced self-reported injuries over three months [difference-in-differences: -58%, 95% confidence interval (CI) -19- -79%]. Similar reductions in near misses were observed but not statistically significant (-53%, 95% CI -92-173%). **CONCLUSIONS:** Our study suggests that meaningful reductions in injury risk for specific types of work can be achieved with co-designed tools optimized to consider inputs from multiple stakeholders. This approach can be especially useful in resource-constrained environments, including working conditions in LMIC

**Stelson EA and Dupuis R. Qualitative methods are epidemiologic methods: revisiting the epidemiologist's toolbox. *American Journal of Epidemiology*. 2026; 195(3):626-633.**

<https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwaf083>

Abstract: Qualitative research methods are frequently described as "compatible" with quantitative epidemiologic methods. Instead of simply "compatible," we argue that qualitative methods are epidemiologic methods. Especially in social epidemiology, which embraces the relationships between psychosocial, historical, contextual, and intersectional factors and health, qualitative research methods have the potential to provide a more complete picture of the distribution of health and disease within a population and contexts contributing to population health. To this end, this paper compares qualitative research and epidemiologic research definitions, outlines epidemiologic uses of qualitative data, and addresses common concerns and misconceptions about qualitative research. We emphasize the shared characteristics and champion the use of shared standards across qualitative and quantitative approaches in epidemiology. This article is part of a Special Collection on Methods in Social Epidemiology

**Whittenburg HN, Taylor JP, McMahon DD, Park S, Meyer J, Anderson CA, et al. Exploring technology use to facilitate supported employment service delivery to individuals with IDD living in rural areas. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*. 2026; 64(2):135-145.**

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1052226325143800>

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