

The Double Hazard: Health Problems, Covid-19 and Economic Insecurity

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Background. Individuals' health and his/her labour market position are closely related. Studies have widely shown that the individuals labour market position, in particular unemployment uncertainty, precarious employment, possible job loss, as well as occupational characteristics, lead to deteriorating health, causing a number of physical and mental problems (Huijts et al., 2015; Michaud et al., 2016; Olesen et al., 2013; Sewdas et al., 2019). Deteriorating health increases individuals' vulnerability in the labour market, both from the perspective of getting a job as well as (depending also on regulation) job loss (Antonisse et al., 2018; OECD & European Union, 2016). COVID-19 has caused a widespread (economic) crisis, which not only directly impacted many individuals due to either falling ill to COVID-19 or by limiting their access to health services, but also impacted economic dynamics, in particular in some sectors, increasing unemployment and in particular increased job insecurity, despite staying employed (due to government furlough schemes). By doing so, it impacted individuals job quality, including his/her income status.

Goal. This paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the employment characteristics, job quality (in particular wages) and labour market mobility of individuals depending on their health status in either pre-crisis period or during COVID-19. We are investigating: (1) what is the relative job quality and labour market mobility of individuals with serious and/or chronic, non-communicative diseases, (2) how COVID-19 impacted the employment prospects and characteristics, labour market mobility/outcomes and job quality of these individuals. We focus primarily on cardio-vascular diseases and neoplasms, which are also the main causes of death in the EU.

Data. The paper relies on population-wide registry micro-data. Information about the structure of employees, occupation, education, and employment type were obtained from the population-wide »Registry of active population«. Data on the unemployed were obtained from the “Registry of unemployed”, which also provides details on the causes of job-loss. The individuals’ “Tax income statements” provide data on their income as well as structure of their incomes (wages, health benefits, other supports). The National Institute of Public Health data provide the details of individuals diagnoses and absences from work. These protected registry data was provided by the Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Results. The research shows that individuals, expectedly, differ in the labour market position, where their chronic health problems significantly affect their well-being and (comparative)

economic situation as well as their labour market mobility and career development. COVID-19 has further challenged the individuals, especially those unemployed with health problems.