
Company organisational changes and long term sickness absence and injury leave: results from a difference in difference approach

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Résumé

Combining high labour intensity, physical and mental strain, some organisational changes result in increased occupational risks. Matching the Hygie administrative database on sickness absence and injury leave of the French population working in the private sector and the survey on organisational change and computerisation (COI survey), our goal is to evaluate the impact of organisational changes implemented by companies on long term absence. We develop a difference in difference approach where we compare long term absence of employees before and after changes that have been implemented in their companies with a control group of employees in inert firms. As changes develop over time, we implement our difference in difference approach using two time windows: a three years' time period during which changes took place and a three years' time period after changes took place. We address the issue of self-selection of employees within changing firms by applying a matching method taking into account the labour market and health history of individuals. We capture organisational change by following up the implementation of new ICT and managerial tools and identify three different treatments: the employee's company has (1) implemented ICT changes only, (2) managerial changes only, (3) both ICT and managerial changes. We run regressions on the whole population and breaking it up by gender. We find in all regressions the same core results: changes in one dimension only reduce long term sickness absence when joint changes in ICT and management tools

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increase occupational risks. There are however gendered differences in the timing and strength of impacts as women are mainly impacted during the period when changes are implemented and impacts are stronger while men are impacted after the period of change. There are also gendered differences in the forms of change that reduce long term absence: women are protected by managerial changes only and men by ICT changes only except when men have more seniority in the company. These results point to the need to better understand the gendered construction of health behaviours as well as that of technology and managerial tools in devising occupational safety and health policies in contexts of organisational change.

Mots-Clés: organisational change, information and communication technologies, managerial tools, long term absence, difference in difference, gender, health behaviour