

## *Solutions for Workplace Change*

Measuring the Characteristics of Precarious Employment and their Effect  
on Health Outcomes

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## **Objective**

In 2001, approximately one-third of Canadian workers were in precarious employment relationships in part-time, temporary, contract, or self-employed positions. This figure has increased from approximately one-quarter of employed workers in the early 1990s. Little is known about the health effects of these forms of employment. This presentation reports on the development of a new conceptual approach to measuring the characteristics of precarious work organization and how they affect health outcomes.

## **Study**

Preliminary evidence is presented based on a sample of 391 individuals who were surveyed in the past 12 months. The sample includes 85 individuals who found work mainly through a temporary agency, 68 who work on short-term contracts, 128 who are in on-call positions without any guarantee of hours worked and 110 who classify themselves as permanent full-time employees.

## **Results**

Employees in precarious employment relationships report poorer overall health and higher levels of stress than workers in standard employment relationships. They face high levels of uncertainty regarding access to work, the terms and conditions of that work, and future earnings. They engage in additional effort searching for work and balancing the demands of multiple employers. They have low earnings, few benefits, and reside in low income households.