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Work Arrangements, Productivity and Employee Health in Singapore

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Abstract

Over the past few decades, there has been a global shift away from traditional forms of work arrangements that involve full-time permanent work on fixed schedules, towards non-permanent and flexible work arrangements that permit greater flexibility in how, when and where work is performed. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more flexible workforce. Work arrangements can have a significant impact on the quality of work and worklife balance. They can affect work performance, earnings, physical and mental health, and well-being of workers, with broader implications on the level of employment and unemployment; the competitiveness of enterprises, industries and the overall economy; infrastructural use and support such as transport and public services; and other businesses such as property and retail. This paper examines non-permanent and flexible work arrangements in Singapore and the implications they have for health on productivity. While the evidence shows that non-standard and flexible work arrangements contribute towards improved labour productivity, care needs to be taken to address the potential adverse impact on employee health. With rapid labour market transformation accelerated by globalisation, automation and digitalisation, more than ever workers in temporary, short term and gig work need to ensure that their knowledge and skills stay relevant in order to remain agile and adaptable as they navigate their careers in the new world of work.

Keywords: non-permanent; temporary; part time; flexible; hypertension