

# Mental Health Effects of Long Work Hours, Night and Weekend Work, and Quick Return

## **Abstract**

Although prior literature has examined the relationship between work schedule characteristics and worker mental health, establishing the causal effect of work schedule characteristics is challenging because of endogeneity issues. This paper investigates how various work schedule characteristics affect workers' mental health using employee surveys and actual working hours recorded over seventeen months in a Japanese manufacturing company. Our major findings are as follows: long working hours may cause workers' mental health to deteriorate regardless of job type, even after correcting for biases derived from endogeneity problems. Furthermore, we find that working on weekends may be associated with white-collar workers' mental health but quick return seems not to be associated with mental health for either white-collar or blue-collar workers. This finding implies that ensuring a prolonged weekly rest period is more effective than securing a minimum daily rest period, at least for white-collar workers.