

Are there health benefits to working beyond the state pension age?

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Background

- A large body of evidence has shown that participation in paid work has health benefits
- Existing research on work and health
 - does not focus on those who extend their working lives beyond State Pension Age;
 - lacks a life-course approach.

Overview

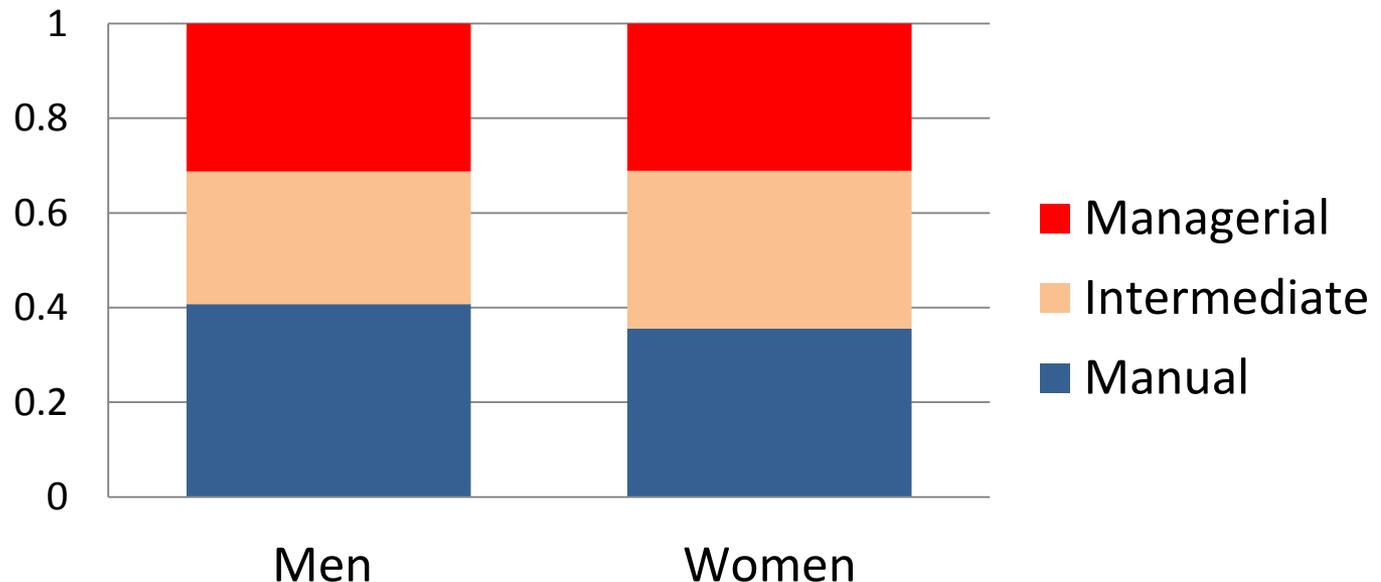
- Examine the longitudinal relationship between paid work beyond State Pension Age (SPA) and health, taking into account characteristics of those who ‘extend’ working life.
- Data: waves 2, 3, and 4 (*collected respectively in 2004/05, 2006/07, and 2008/09*) of English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, representative of individuals aged 50+ in England (N~ 2,300).

Key Findings /1

Overall, in 2006/07, 1 in 5 English people reported being in paid work beyond SPA

25% of *women* aged 60-69; **14%** of *men* aged 65-74

Social class distribution of workers, by gender



Key Findings /2

Both male and female respondents in paid work beyond SPA were more likely (compared to those not in paid work) to report:

1. Better physical health;
2. Fewer depressive symptoms;
3. Less sleep disturbance.

Why?

Are there health benefits associated with working beyond SPA?

Are the healthier people more likely to continue working beyond SPA?

Key Findings /3

When we account for age, marital status, wealth, work history, education, and previous health we find that for both men and women work beyond SPA is **no longer** significantly related to good health.

Who is working beyond SPA?

Key Findings /3

1. Men and women with *higher levels of education*;
2. Men in the *highest wealth* quintile and women with a mortgage;
3. Divorced/Separated women;
4. Men and women who have never left work because of ill health, who have not had any long-lasting health problems throughout their lives, and who continue to be in *good health*.

Key Findings /4

Although respondents in paid work beyond SPA were more likely to report better health outcomes (compared to those not in paid work),

Such associations are mostly explained by previous health.

Key Findings /5

Direction and strength of association between paid work at wave 3 and 'good physical health' after two years

	MEN		WOMEN	
	<i>Not controlling for previous health</i>	<i>Controlling for previous health</i>	<i>Not controlling for previous health</i>	<i>Controlling for previous health</i>
Managerial	0.311 ***	- 0.015	0.401 ***	0.031
Intermediate	0.259 ***	0.034	0.257 ***	-0.026
Routine	0.380 ***	0.060	0.226 ***	0.001
Not in paid work	Reference			

Controlling for age, level of education, work histories, marital status, highest wealth, life-course health, smoking, physical activity, caring

Discussion

- Potential health benefits of working beyond SPA need to be considered in light of the fact that *those in good health are much more likely to be working past SPA in the first place.*
- Poor health means that individuals leave the labour market (Börsch-Supan et al. 2009; Disney et al. 2006; Rice et al. 2011; van den Berg et al. 2010)

Policy Implications

- It is incorrect to assume that keeping people in paid work for longer will improve or maintain health; evidence does not support this assumption
- Health throughout the lifecourse seems key to any policy aimed at keeping people in the labour market for longer
- More research is needed to investigate
 - Trigger points: Is there a time/age when health issues matter the most?
 - Will these findings also hold for future cohorts of older workers?
 - If people in poor health continue in paid work, could this lead to worse health?

References

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Questions



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