

Precarious Employment



Theoretical framework

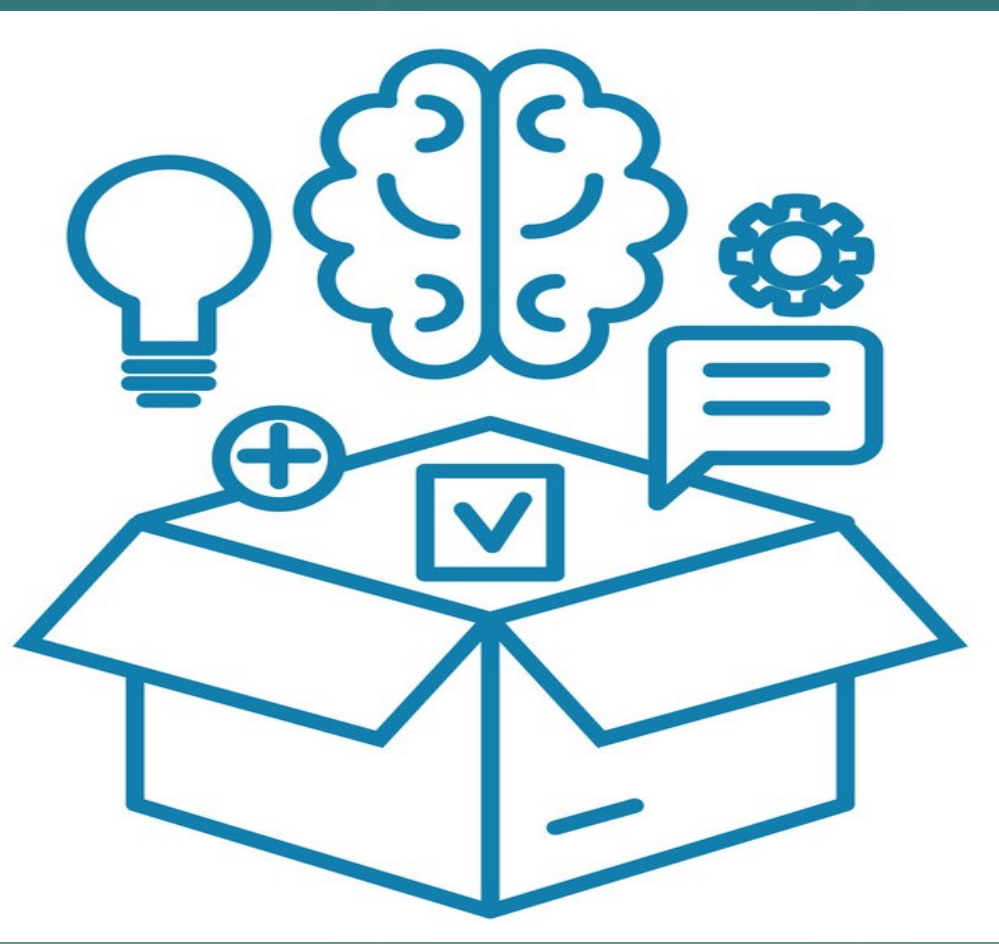
Harmonized Definitions

The Research Agenda

Resources Publications and Training material

OMEGA - NET Outputs related to Precarious Employment

Resources



<https://youtu.be/5JdbHI5aJjk>

Discussion paper

Scand J Work Environ Health 2020;46(3):321-329 [pdf](#) [full text](#)
doi:10.5271/sjweh.3860 | Published online: 17 Nov 2019, Issue date: 01 May 2020

Precarious employment in occupational health – an OMEGA-NET working group position paper

by Bodin T, Çağlayan C, Garde AH, Gnesi M, Jonsson J, Kiran S, Kreshpaj B, Leinonen T, Mehlum IS, Nena E, Orellana C, Peckham T, Sekas N, Vanraelen C, Jullä M

Objectives The aims of this position paper are to (i) summarize research on precarious employment (PE) in the context of occupational health; (ii) develop a theoretical framework that distinguishes PE from related concepts and delineates important contextual factors; and (iii) identify key methodological challenges and directions for future research on PE and health.

Methods This position paper is the result of a working group consisting of researchers from the EU, Turkey and the USA, who have discussed the issue over the course of six months (October 2018–April 2019), meeting both online and face-to-face on several occasions.

Results The lack of a common theoretical framework of PE hinders it from becoming an established part of occupational and public health research. There are also issues regarding operationalization in surveys and registers. Further, previous research on PE and health suffers from methodological limitations including inadequate study designs and biased assessments of exposure and outcomes. PE is highly dependent on contextual factors and cross-country comparison has proven very difficult. We also point to the uneven social distribution of PE, ie, higher prevalence among women, immigrants, young and low educated. We propose a theoretical framework for understanding precarious employment as a multidimensional construct.

Conclusions A generally accepted multidimensional definition of PE should be the highest priority. Future studies would benefit from improved exposure assessment, temporal resolution, and accounting for confounders, as well as testing possible mechanisms, eg, by adopting multi-level and intersectional analytical approaches in order to understand the complexity of PE and its relation to health.

Review

Scand J Work Environ Health 2020;46(3):235-247 [pdf](#) [full text](#)
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What is precarious employment? A systematic review of definitions and operationalizations from quantitative and qualitative studies

by Kreshpaj B, Orellana C, Burström B, Davis L, Hemmingsson T, Johansson G, Kjellberg K, Jonsson J, Wegman DH, Bodin T

Objectives The lack of a common definition for precarious employment (PE) severely hampers the comparison of studies within and between countries, consequently reducing the applicability of research findings. We carried out a systematic review to summarize how PE has been conceptualized and implemented in research and identify the construct's dimensions in order to facilitate guidance on its operationalization.

Methods According to PRISMA guidelines, we searched Web of Science and Scopus for publications with variations of PE in the title or abstract. The search returned 1225 unique entries, which were screened for eligibility. Exclusion criteria were (i) language other than English, (ii) lack of a definition for PE, and (iii) non-original research. A total of 63 full-text articles were included and qualitative thematic-analysis was performed in order to identify dimensions of PE.

Results We identified several theory-based definitions of PE developed by previous researchers. Most definitions and operationalizations were either an accommodation to available data or the direct result of qualitative studies identifying themes of PE. The thematic-analysis of the selected articles resulted in a multidimensional construct including the following three dimensions: employment insecurity, income inadequacy, and lack of rights and protection.

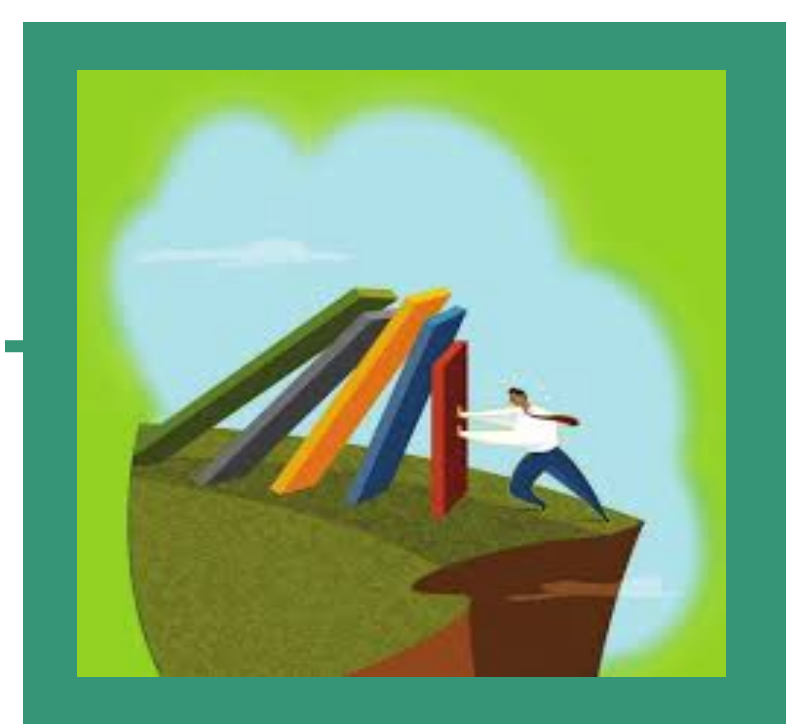
Conclusions Despite a growing number of studies on PE, most fail to clearly define the concept, severely restricting the advancement of the research of PE as a social determinant of health. Our combined theoretical and empirical review suggests that a common multidimensional definition could be developed and deployed in different labor market contexts using a variety of methodological approaches.

Research Needs



- Causes and consequences
- Standardization of data reporting in different settings to increase comparability
- More longitudinal studies that include exposure assessment, mechanisms and mediator studies
- Studies on other outcomes such as CVD and biomarkers of stress

Key messages from OMEGA-NET researchers:



We need to understand much better what precarious employment is, how it is defined, and which workers are in jobs that we call precarious jobs



We need more research to understand what drives these adverse effects of precarious employment, what is actually happening, and how can we counteract the negative consequences of precarious employment



Precarious employment is rapidly increasing in many countries in the world, and it needs to be a top priority in research, also for policy makers



For information and resources:
<https://omeganetcohorts.eu/>