

The association of health with family and employment statuses in Germany, France and the Netherlands

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Background

The association of health with family and employment statuses is often discussed from the view of the multiple role-burden or the multiple role-attachment hypotheses. Besides, it is considered that the relation between employment, family and health is strongly influenced by the national policy and welfare systems. The aim of this study is to compare the association between health and fulfilling multiple roles in Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Method

Data come from the Generations and Gender Surveys carried out in Germany (2009), France (2008) and the Netherlands (2007). The analyses are restricted to people aged 18 to 64 years. The samples comprise 2,420 people in Germany, 5,210 in France and 4,969 in the Netherlands. The descriptive results are weighted. Logistic regression analyses are in progress.

Results

The family and employment arrangements vary substantially between the three countries, particularly for women. About 64 % of married women in France work full time, compared to only 17% in the Netherlands and 37 % in Germany. Similar relationship is found when comparing working women with children across the countries. While employment was found to have a protective effect on health in all three countries, especially for men, the number of working hours did not play a central role. Yet, part-time employed women in France as well as part-time employed men in the Netherlands reported more often poor health than full-time employed. Besides, persons without a partner significantly more often rated their health as poor. The same holds for persons living without children in the household.

Conclusions

The results show that the association between health and fulfilling multiple roles (i.e. working and having family) is similar among the countries; yet the strength of this association differs considerably. Further investigations should reveal the factors that drive these differences as well as interactions between the three social roles are considered.

Key messages

- Employment, partnership and parenthood are strongly related with self-rated health in Germany, France and the Netherlands
- The association between health and fulfilling multiple roles is similar among the countries; yet the strength of this association differs considerably