



The Positive Potential of Confronting Stress in the Forest Industry

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Forest Industry in the “Healthosphere”

Forest Industry as
a risky and
dangerous work
place

Health and Wellbeing Trends in
NZ:

- Masculinity and its relationship with suicide
- Health Inequities:
 - Maori Health Trajectories / Life Expectancy
 - Rural Health Inequity
 - Socio Economic Health Inequity

Definitions ...

- Stress: ?
- Psycho-social Hazards: those aspects of the design and management of work, and its social and organisational contexts that have the potential for causing psychological or physical harm.
- Burnout: a state of physical, cognitive, emotional and interpersonal exhaustion thought to arise from exposure to chronic, acute and/or unresolvable stress that depletes intrinsic energy sources over time.

Evidence of Psychosocial Hazards operating within Forestry Work Places

Psycho-Social Risk Factors	Associated Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operational Complexity• Job Control• Time / Work Pressure• Repetitiveness / Monotony• Work Security• Exposure to risk• Income satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neck / shoulder and lower back disorders• Subjective fatigue symptoms (Burnout?)• Incidents and near misses• Job satisfaction• Life satisfaction
Regions / Populations: 6 studies covering forest workers and machine operators in Tasmania, Norway, the EU, Japan and NZ	

Health Impacts

1. Mental Health and Safety
 1. Exposure to risk has been associated with poor mental health
 2. Mental ill health has been associated with risky and dangerous behaviour.
2. Burnout: Still Working Longitudinal Study (Finland) ... A one unit increase in burnout score associated with ...
 1. Risk of all causes mortality < age 45 years increased by 35%
 2. 10% increase in risk of injury requiring hospitalisation
 3. Increased risk of medically certified absence and hospitalisation due to mental and behavioural disorders and diseases of the circulatory, respiratory and musculoskeletal systems

Interaction with Home and Community Life

- Non-work predictors of burnout:
 - Never having been married; partner conflict; lifetime mood disorder
- Negative family to work spillover ... reduction in cognitive resources
 - Partner conflict / Family hassles
- WHO: social determinants of health ... associated with health-threatening behaviours, e.g. smoking, alcohol / drug use, carbohydrate-dense diets.
 - Housing conditions and tenure; consumption potential; neighbourhood quality

Summary

- Evidence suggests psychosocial hazards will be operating within the forest industry and the communities in which it exists
- Evidence suggests work related stress is likely to be having a detrimental impact on the health and safety of the forestry workforce.

How do move forward from here?

1. Broaden annual health checks to include mental and social wellbeing and aggregate that data.
2. Increase understanding of psychosocial hazards in operation within the NZ forest industry and the broader social and organisational conditions that are perceived to cause them ...

“We need to stop pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they’re falling in.” – Bishop Desmond Tutu