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The health effects of forced retirement on older New Zealanders

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the relationship between forced retirement and physical and mental health of older New Zealanders. As well, individuals' social support, socioeconomic status, and participation in employment and voluntary and recreational activities also impacted health and adjustment to retirement. Participants who responded to all three surveys conducted by the Health, Work, and Retirement (HWR) study, and the New Zealand Longitudinal Study of Ageing (NZLSA), over 2006, 2008, and 2010 were included in the study. Bivariate and multivariate methods were applied to data from 2006 and 2010. The findings showed a negative relationship between forced retirement and mental health at 2010 when health and age at 2006 were held constant. High social support was associated with better physical and mental health, and low and high socioeconomic status showed physical health benefits. Employment in retirement was positive for physical health, and participation in recreational activities was positive for mental health and adjustment to retirement. Participation in voluntary activities was associated with adjustment difficulties. It is argued that the loss of control associated with forced retirement is regained through participation in meaningful employment and recreational activities.

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“... and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain ... 1 Cor.15:10.

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