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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.

Acknowledgements

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

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables & Figures.....	vi
Chapter I: Introduction and Background.....	1
Thesis outline.....	2
Chapter II: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....	3
Retirement.....	3
Life course perspective.....	4
Continuity theory.....	6
Retirement adjustment.....	7
Retirement reason.....	11
Retirement and health.....	15
Social support.....	20
Socioeconomic factors.....	24
Bridge employment, voluntary activities, recreational activities, and retirement adjustment.....	27
Chapter III: Methods.....	32
Participants.....	32
Demographics of characteristics.....	33
Measures.....	34
Chapter IV: Results.....	36
Data coding and preparation.....	36
Analyses.....	37
Hypothesis 1.....	41
Hypothesis 2.....	45
Hypothesis 3.....	50
Hypothesis 4.....	55
Chapter V: Discussion.....	58
Retirement reason and health.....	58
Social support and health.....	59
Socioeconomic status and health.....	60
Bridge employment, voluntary activities, recreational activities, and health.....	61

Limitations.....	63
Conclusion.....	63
Reference List.....	65

List of Tables & Figures

Tables

Table 1:	Demographic characteristics for the 2006 sample (n=2342).....	38
Table 2:	Means (Ms) and standard deviations (SDs) across continuous predictor variables at 2006	39
Table 3:	Ms and SDs across selected study variables at 2010	40
Table 4:	Ms and SDs of new work statuses and health at 2006.....	40
Table 5:	Ms and SDs of new work statuses and health at 2010.....	42
Table 6:	Hierarchical multiple regression analyses (HMRA) of age at 2006, physical health at 2006, and work statuses (dummy variables) on physical health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N=1645).....	44
Table 7:	HMRA of age at 2006, mental health at 2006, and dummy variables on mental health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N=1645)	45
Table 8:	HMRA of age at 2006, physical health at 2006, dummy variables, social support (Social Provisions Scale [SPS]) at 2010, and the interaction of SPS with work status groups on physical health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N=1546).....	46
Table 9:	HMRA of age at 2006, mental health at 2006, dummy variables, and SPS at 2010, and the interaction of SPS with work status groups on mental health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N= 1546).....	48
Table 10:	HMRA of age at 2006, physical health at 2006, dummy variables, socioeconomic status (Economic Living Standard Index Short Form [ELSI-SF] scores 2010), and the interaction of ELSI-SF with work status groups on physical health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N= 1527)	51
Table 11:	HMRA of age at 2006, mental health at 2006, dummy variables, ELSI-SF 2010, and the interaction of ELSI-SF with work status groups on mental health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , adjusted r^2 , and r^2 change (N= 1527).....	53
Table 12:	Multiple regression analyses (MRA) of employment status, voluntary	

	activities, and recreational activities on physical health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , and adjusted r^2 (N=94).....	55
Table 13:	MRA of employment status, voluntary activities, and recreational activities on mental health at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , and adjusted r^2 (N=94).....	56
Table 14:	MRA of employment status, voluntary activities, and recreational activities on retirement adjustment at 2010, showing standardized coefficients, R, total r^2 , and adjusted r^2 (N=77)	57

Figures

Figure 1.	Hypothesized associations between retirement reason and post-retirement health and adjustment.	9
Figure 2.	A life course perspective linking retirement, retirement adjustment, and health.	11
Figure 3.	Means for new work statuses on physical health scores at 2006	41
Figure 4.	Means for new work statuses on mental health scores at 2006.....	41
Figure 5.	Means for work statuses on physical health scores at 2010.....	43
Figure 6.	Means for work statuses on mental health scores at 2010.....	43
Figure 7.	Mean differences of low and high social support for each new work status group and physical health scores (2010)	47
Figure 8.	Mean differences of low and high social support (SPS) for work status two and the impact on physical health scores (2010)	47
Figure 9.	Mean differences of low and high social support for the new work statuses and mental health scores (2010)	49
Figure 10.	Mean differences of low and high social support (SPS) for work status one and the impact on mental health scores (2010)	49
Figure 11.	Mean differences of low and high social support (SPS) for work status three and the impact on mental health scores (2010)	50
Figure 12.	Mean differences of low and high ELSI-SF scores for the new work statuses and physical health scores (2010)	52
Figure 13.	Mean differences of low and high socioeconomic status (ELSI-SF) for work status three and the impact on physical health scores (2010)	52
Figure 14.	Mean differences of low and high ELSI-SF scores for the new work	

status and mental health scores (2010)	54
Figure 15. Mean differences of low and high socioeconomic status (ELSI-SF) for work status one and the impact on mental health scores (2010)	54