Gac Sanit. 2026;40(S4):152

Gaceta Sanitaria

https://www.gacetasanitaria.org

668 - EXPLORING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BENEFITS OF REDUCED WORKING HOURS WITH MAINTAINED SALARY: A SCOPING REVIEW AND EVIDENCE MAP

M. Utzet, M. Soler-Font, J.M. Ramada, M. Menéndez, M. Silva-Peñaherrera, F.G. Benavides, C. Serra

Centre for Research in Occupational Health, Department of Medicine and Life Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra; HMRI-Hospital del Mar Research Institute; CIBER of Epidemiology and Public Health; Health Technology Assessment in Primary Care and Mental Health (PRISMA), Institut de Recerca Sant Joan de Déu; Occupational Health Service, Parc de Salut Mar; La Isla Network.

Resumen

Background/Objectives: The aim of this review was to map the characteristics and the effects of interventions that reduce working hours with full pay maintained on workers' health, well-being and work-life balance and to assess whether a gender perspective was incorporated.

Methods: A scoping review was conducted following PRISMA-ScR and JBI guidelines. Scientific databases (PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Cochrane, ProQuest, Epistemonikos) and grey literature sources (international, European and national labor and occupational health agencies) were systematically searched for studies published between April 2014 and May 2025 in English or Spanish. Eligible studies comprised employed adults in Scandinavian and Western European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand exposed to interventions reducing working hours with full pay maintained. Screening, data extraction, and quality appraisal were conducted independently. An evidence map was developed to synthesize the findings.

Results: Ten scientific articles and five grey literature reports were included, seven from Scandinavian, seven from Western European countries, and one that included both regions. Working time reductions ranged from 10-25%. Most studies reported

0213-9111 © 2026 SESPAS. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Todos los derechos reservados

positive effects on work-life balance (100%), mental health (81.8%), and general health and well-being (58.3%). Qualitative data confirmed improvements in recovery, fatigue, and family time. Eleven studies included a gender perspective, with eight providing stratified analyses. Several studies indicated that women increased the time dedicated to caregiving and household, reinforcing traditional roles, while men's involvement rose slightly without shifting responsibility equity.

Conclusions/Recommendations: Despite heterogeneity of interventions and limited implementation contexts, it seems that reducing working hours to around 30-35 per week without pay loss may improve work-life balance, health, and well-being. Gender differences emerged, with women often facing increased unpaid work. As the evidence is still scarce particularly regarding long-term effects, sector-specific interventions, and gendered effects, further research is needed to inform and evaluate policies that promote equitable and sustainable work-time arrangements.

0213-9111 © 2026 SESPAS. Publicado por Elsevier España, S.L.U. Todos los derechos reservados