

Physically demanding jobs linked to poor health in delayed retirement

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Men and women who have physically demanding jobs may experience poorer mental and physical health if they delay their retirement, new research led by Curtin University has found.

The research, published in *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, analyzed data from the Household, Income and Labour

Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey to determine whether early or traditional [retirement](#) had a significant impact on an individual's physical or [mental health](#). The research also investigated whether someone's job type, gender, access to superannuation funds and [geographical location](#) affected this.

Lead author Associate Professor Kantha Dayaram, from the School of Management at Curtin University, said the increased demand for the age pension in Australia has led to reforms in extending the [retirement age](#) to 67 years, but this could be unfavorable for some Australians.

"Although Australia has no mandatory retirement age, people who are looking to retire are currently able to access their age pension at 65 or older, depending on the year they were born, and employer based superannuation funds at age 60," Associate Professor Dayaram said.

"The qualifying age for access to age pension will increase by six months every two years to 67 years by July 2023. With the introduction of new reforms to delay when people can access these funds, it could have serious health implications for some of the aging population.

"Our study found that there are no significant physical or mental health effects for males and females if they retire early or at the 'traditional age' of 65. However, we did find that men and women with labor intensive [jobs](#) experienced lower physical and mental health if they retired later, compared to those who worked in professional and managerial jobs.

"Our research also found that male retirees who had access to superannuation funds experienced better mental health outcomes than females with superannuation funds, and female retirees living in remote locations experienced lower mental health outcomes than their urban counterparts."

Associate Professor Dayaram explained that the findings may be of interest to policy makers, who need to consider people's occupations, financial access and geographical location when making these decisions, rather than just someone's age.

"The findings highlight the impact of our jobs, financial status and living location on our health when we retire. Workforce planning and flexible work arrangements are crucial to our health, and policy makers need to find suitable ways to address this," Associate Professor Dayaram said.

The paper was co-authored by Professor Alistair McGuire from the London School of Economics in the UK.

The paper is titled "Retirement reforms: Occupational strain and [health](#)."

More information: Kantha Dayaram et al. Retirement Reforms: Occupational Strain and Health, *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society* (2019). [DOI: 10.1111/irel.12242](https://doi.org/10.1111/irel.12242)

Provided by Curtin University

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