

GIG-OSH: Health and Safety in the platform economy



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Encuentro del grupo de trabajo de salud laboral de la Sociedad Española de Epidemiología, 12 Abril 2024



Digital platform work

Type of platform	Main services	Sociodemographic characteristics of workers	Motivations to be a digital platform worker
Online work platform	Traduction Data analysis Programming Medical consultation	Youth Majority are male Considerable proportion with high education levels Majority are immigrants	Supplementary income Work flexibility Need to work from home
Location-based work platform	Taxi services Delivery Domestic work Home services	Youth Majority are male Considerable proportion with high education levels Significant share of migrants	Lack of employment alternatives Work flexibility Higher incomes

Source: Benach et al., 2023.

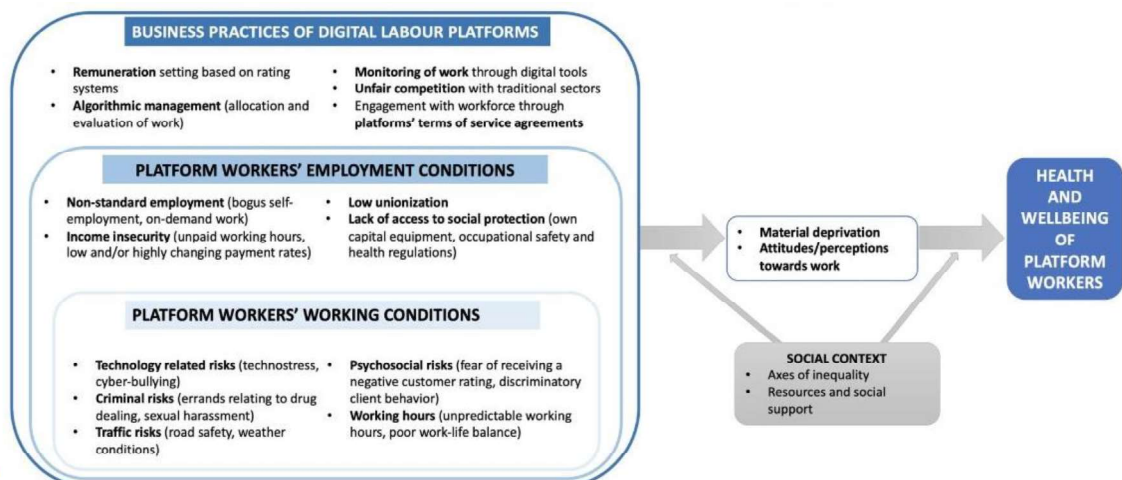


State of the art

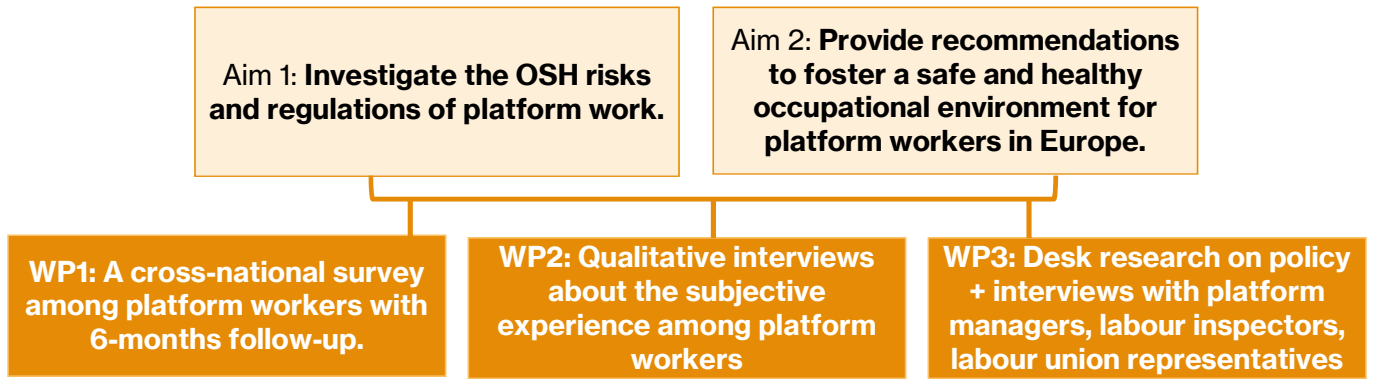
- **Group of platform workers studied:** mostly taxi drivers and delivery workers. Lack of studies of online workers or other types of onsite platform workers (e.g. cleaners, plumbers, etc.)
- **Outcomes studied:**
 - Mental health (fatigue, stress, sleep deprivation) → This is the most common outcome studied
 - Subjective well-being (general health)
 - Musculoskeletal pain
 - Safety concerns (self-protection, harrassment)
 - Injuries/accidents
 - COVID-related consequences
- **Quality of the studies:**
 - **Definition of digital platform work** (mixed study populations, mixed types of platform work)
 - **Measurements of the outcomes:** lack of use of validated instruments
 - Quantitative studies (all **cross-sectional**): the majority do not include a **control group** (non-exposed group)



Focus of the project



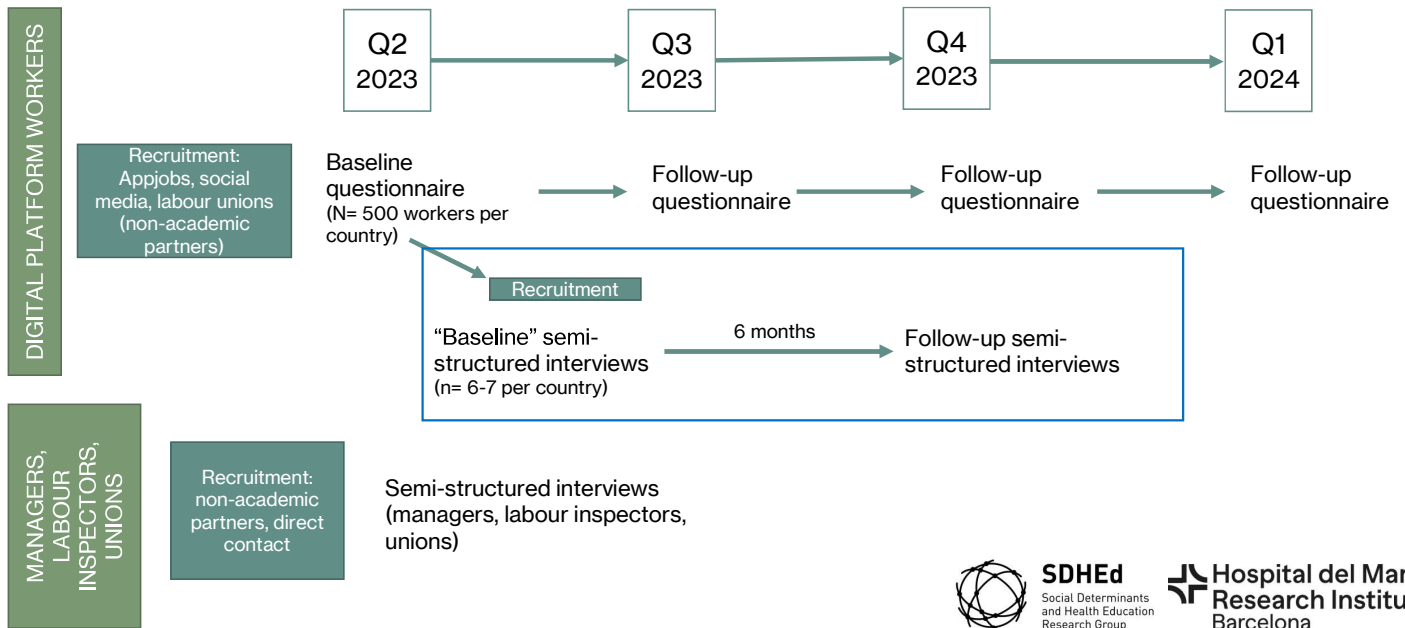
Project overview



Research partners



Study design



First results

	Onsite (n=123)	Online (n=355)
Gender (%)		
Male	53,7%	50,0%
Female	45,5%	47,7%
Other	0,8%	2,3%
Age (mean)	33,58	34,89
Immigrant (%)	32,5%	30,4%
Type of contract (%)		
Without an employment contract	40,2%	66,2%
As an employee (in unlimited employment - permanent contract)	18,9%	2,5%
As an employee (in fixed-term employment - limited duration)	11,5%	3,7%
As a self-employed person	22,1%	18,9%
Under a student employment contract	1,6%	0,0%
Other	1,6%	1,1%
I don't know	4,1%	7,6%
General health (%)		
Excellent	13,2%	16,3%
Very good	39,7%	40,6%
Good	37,2%	35,5%
Fair	9,1%	7,3%
Poor	0,8%	0,3%
WHO-Five Well-Being Index score (mean)	52,8%	58,2%
Have health problems (%)		
Hearing problems	6,6%	4,0%
Backache	49,2%	41,0%
Muscular pains in shoulders, neck and/or upper limbs	44,2%	38,9%
Muscular pains in lower limbs	35,2%	22,9%
Headaches, eyestrain	45,0%	43,1%
Informed about health and safety risk (%)		
Very well informed	13,9%	22,7%
Well informed	45,9%	46,6%
Not very well informed	24,6%	17,9%
Not at all informed	15,6%	12,8%



First results

While digital labour platforms **initially tended to exploit the regulatory grey zones** across European labour markets to abrogate and circumvent the traditional employer responsibility of employee protection, they are **increasingly utilising the national platforms for social dialogue to develop unilateral, bipartite and in some instances tripartite health and safety initiatives to protect platform workers**. This shift from being what can be characterised as rule-preventers towards being rule-makers appear largely driven by the pressures from the broader institutional setting, where the national context appears pivotal for the health and safety solutions. **To push forward new regulation, digital platforms and social partners particularly, such as trade unions and employers' organisations, have utilised their institutional power resource, but often in different combinations with their available associational, coalitional, ideational and structural power resources**. Their combinations of power resources appear not only closely tied to the national context, but also seem to influence their regulatory approach – statutory law, collective bargaining, unilateral initiatives, or case law rulings – as well as their role as rule-makers, rule takers or rule preventers when addressing the regulatory health and safety loopholes within the platform economy. However, as a consequence of these combinations, platform workers are now less protected in some countries and subsectors than others.



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