

Immigrants, Work, and Health in Spain: Influence of Legal Status and Employment Contract on Health



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Introduction

- Migration is transforming global population health.
- If all migrants were taken as a country, it would have the 5th largest population in the world, with over 200 million people
- Spain experienced an immigration boom (1% to 12% pop) between 1996 and 2009, with the most represented immigrant collectives from Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia, Romania
- Undocumented migrants, making up 10-15% of all global migrants, are often in more vulnerable positions than their documented migrant and native counterparts
- The ITSAL (Inmigración, Trabajo y Salud) study looks at immigration, work and health in Spain
- There is a large sub-sample of undocumented workers, facilitating analysis of documentation status's health effects
- Here, contract type and documentation status are combined as a variable potentially significant to immigrant health.

Objective

Analysis of the relationship of nativity, legal status and employment contract with health in workers in Spain.

Methods

Sample:

Workers 4 cities across Spain (Barcelona, Madrid, Huelva, Valencia)

– Foreign-born (n=1849)

– Spanish-born (n=509)

- Must have worked in Spain 3 of last 12 months
- Quota sampling based on country of origin, gender and area of residence

Variable Definition:

Outcome Variables: Health

- Self-rated health
- Mental Health (GHQ-12)

Variable of Interest: Legal/contract situation

- Spanish-born
1. permanent contract (pc)
 2. temporary contract (tc)
 3. no contract (nc)
- Foreign-born
4. documented, pc
 5. documented, tc
 6. documented, nc
 7. Undocumented

Explanatory Variables

Sex, Age, Education, Economic Activity Sector

Analysis:

Frequencies

Logistical regression:

legal/contract situation α each health outcome (stratified by gender; crudely, then adjusted for explanatory variables)

Results

Frequencies

- Highest % 's health problems in doc. foreign-born non-contracted
- Lowest % 's of health problems in perm.-contracted workers

Table 1. Distribution of each legal/contract situation across socio-demographic variables (ITSAL Project, Spain 2008).

	Spanish-born			Foreign-born			TOTAL	
	Permanent contract	Temporary contract	No contract	Documented, permanent contract	Documented, temporary contract	Undocumented	n	%
Sex								
Male	123 (51.0)	112 (54.1)	27 (44.3)	275 (56.1)	474 (62.7)	91 (55.2)	248 (56.6)	1350 (57.3)
Female	118 (49.0)	34 (55.9)	34 (55.7)	215 (43.9)	282 (37.3)	74 (44.8)	190 (43.4)	1008 (42.7)
Age								
Under 30	89 (36.0)	113 (54.9)	10 (16.1)	224 (45.7)	370 (48.0)	83 (50.3)	287 (65.5)	1185 (58.3)
30 to 39	152 (63.1)	94 (45.4)	42 (68.9)	266 (54.3)	386 (51.1)	82 (49.7)	151 (34.5)	1173 (49.7)
Education								
Primary, at most	41 (17.0)	52 (25.1)	17 (27.9)	92 (18.8)	204 (26.9)	57 (34.5)	142 (32.4)	665 (28.2)
Secondary, at most	200 (83.0)	155 (74.9)	44 (72.1)	398 (81.2)	460 (60.8)	108 (65.5)	294 (67.1)	1609 (71.6)
Economic Sectors								
Agriculture	3 (1.2)	10 (4.8)	0 (0)	10 (2.0)	120 (15.9)	20 (12.1)	67 (15.3)	230 (9.8)
Industry/Utilities	57 (23.7)	23 (11.1)	2 (3.3)	53 (10.8)	68 (9.0)	6 (3.6)	19 (4.3)	228 (9.7)
Construction	13 (5.4)	15 (7.4)	5 (8.2)	95 (19.4)	220 (29.3)	30 (18.2)	90 (20.5)	466 (20.6)
Commerce	48 (19.9)	30 (14.5)	18 (29.5)	83 (16.9)	79 (10.4)	25 (15.2)	29 (6.6)	312 (13.2)
Hospitality	15 (6.2)	24 (11.6)	13 (21.3)	86 (18.0)	96 (13.0)	23 (13.9)	94 (21.5)	355 (15.1)
Transport/Communication	18 (7.5)	13 (6.3)	0 (0)	47 (9.6)	41 (5.4)	9 (5.5)	12 (2.7)	140 (5.9)
Health/Finance	42 (17.4)	28 (13.5)	10 (16.4)	31 (6.3)	46 (6.1)	7 (4.2)	22 (5.0)	186 (7.9)
Public Admin./Educat./Social Services	44 (18.7)	44 (21.5)	10 (16.4)	50 (10.2)	38 (5.0)	6 (3.6)	14 (3.2)	207 (8.8)
Documented: Permanent	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (6.5)	46 (6.1)	39 (23.6)	90 (20.5)	212 (9.0)
Self-Rated Health								
Good	220 (91.3)	177 (85.5)	53 (86.0)	428 (87.3)	649 (85.8)	135 (81.8)	369 (84.2)	2031 (86.1)
Fair	21 (8.7)	30 (14.5)	8 (13.1)	62 (12.7)	107 (14.2)	30 (18.2)	69 (15.8)	327 (13.9)
Mental Health Problems								
Yes	48 (19.9)	58 (28.0)	16 (26.2)	93 (19.0)	207 (27.4)	55 (33.3)	114 (26.0)	591 (25.1)
No	163 (66.1)	149 (72.0)	45 (73.8)	397 (81.0)	548 (72.5)	110 (66.7)	324 (74.0)	1766 (74.9)
Total	241 (100)	207 (100)	61 (100)	490 (100)	756 (100)	165 (100)	438 (100)	2358 (100)

Females

- Highest health problems risk: Foreign-born non-contracted
- Health gradient along legal/contract situation, from the Spanish-born permanently-contracted to the foreign-born non-contracted

Table 2. Comparison between legal/contract situation and our two health outcomes of interest in females (ITSAL Project, Spain 2008).

	Self-Rated Health			Mental Health				
	Prevalence of Poor Health	cOR (95%CI)	aOR* (95%CI)	Prevalence of Mental Health Problems	cOR (95%CI)	aOR* (95%CI)		
Spanish-born								
Permanent Contract	11	9.3	1	28	23.7	1		
Temporary Contract	11	11.6	1.27 (0.53 - 3.08)	30	31.6	1.48 (0.81 - 2.72)		
No Contract	5	14.7	1.68 (0.54 - 5.08)	10	29.4	1.34 (0.57 - 3.14)		
Foreign-born, Documented								
Permanent Contract	35	16.3	1.89 (0.92 - 3.88)	177	18.1	0.71 (0.41 - 1.23)		
Temporary Contract	55	19.5	2.36 (1.19 - 4.69)	259	30.1	1.39 (0.85 - 2.27)		
No Contract	20	27.0	3.60 (1.61 - 8.06)	3.01	1.26 - 7.15)	28	37.8	1.96 (1.04 - 3.68)
Foreign-born, Undocumented	34	17.9	2.12 (1.03 - 4.37)	1.80	0.81 - 4.00)	50	26.3	1.15 (0.67 - 1.96)

*Adjusted for age, education, and economic activities.

Males

- Highest mental health problem risk: Foreign-born non-contracted
- Mental health gradient by contract type in foreign-born documented

Table 3. Comparison between legal/contract situation and our two health outcomes of interest in males (ITSAL Project, Spain 2008).

	Self-Rated Health			Mental Health				
	Prevalence of Poor Health	cOR (95%CI)	aOR* (95%CI)	Prevalence of Mental Health Problems	cOR (95%CI)	aOR* (95%CI)		
Spanish-born								
Permanent Contract	10	8.1	1	20	16.3	1		
Temporary Contract	19	17.0	2.31 (1.02 - 5.21)	28	25.0	1.72 (0.90 - 3.26)		
No Contract	3	11.1	1.41 (0.36 - 5.52)	6	22.2	1.47 (0.53 - 4.11)		
Foreign-born, Documented								
Permanent Contract	27	9.8	1.23 (0.58 - 2.63)	1.19	0.54 - 2.60)	54	19.6	1.26 (0.72 - 2.21)
Temporary Contract	52	11.0	1.39 (0.69 - 2.83)	1.43	0.68 - 3.04)	122	25.7	1.79 (1.06 - 3.02)
No Contract	10	11.0	1.40 (0.56 - 3.51)	1.40	0.54 - 3.62)	27	29.7	2.17 (1.13 - 4.19)
Foreign-born, Undocumented	35	14.1	1.86 (0.89 - 3.89)	2.10	0.96 - 4.63)	64	25.8	1.79 (1.03 - 3.13)

*Adjusted for age, education, and economic activities.

Discussion

- This study offers a first look at associations between employment conditions, documentation, and immigrant health
- Worker's health emerged as more strongly associated with employment conditions than legal status
- The worst health outcomes were observed in documented immigrants without job contracts
- Literature supports the employment condition/health association
- **Limitations**
 - Methodological challenges inherent to migration
 - Sensitivity of documentation status
 - Hidden population necessitates quota sampling
 - Cross-sectional nature limits interpretations of causality
- **Strengths**
 - Examination of largely unknown situation of undocumented immigrants
 - New combined approach analyzing legal and contract situation combined as one

Next Steps

- Continued migrant health methodological development
- Further exploration of legal status, employment conditions and health in migrant workers
 - Contract details can be analyzed with respect to health outcomes and legal/contract situations