

Joint effect of weekly paid working hours and multiple job holding on work absence due to health problems among basic education teachers in Brazil. The EDUCATEL study.

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BACKGROUND

In Brazil, basic education teachers experience a great burden derived from the intensive workload. Despite the latest educational reforms were intended at the regulation of extra-curricular activities and the implementation of the exclusive dedication to one school, recent reports have revealed that a great proportion are still exposed to very long working hours and work simultaneously in several schools. The **objective** of this study was to assess the relationship between the combination of working in several schools and weekly paid working hours with work absence due to health problems and to examine potential gender differences among basic education teachers in Brazil.

METHODS

Study design and study population:

Cross-sectional study based on a phone survey conducted between October 2015 and March 2016 on a representative sample of basic education teachers of Brazil (n=6510). Only active teachers at the moment of the survey were included (n=5116). The participation rate was 85%.

Statistical analyses:

- Poisson regression models with robust variance were conducted in order to obtain crude and adjusted prevalence ratios (PR) and its 95% confidence intervals (95%CI) of the association between the joint effect of working in more than one school and weekly paid working hours on sickness absence and medically certified sickness absence.
- All analyses were stratified by sex and adjusted by age, type of contract and salary.

Variables:

1) Health outcomes:

- Sickness absence: Being absent from work for at least one day in the last 12 months due to health problems.
- Medically certified sickness absence: A doctor certified the health problem for being absent from work.

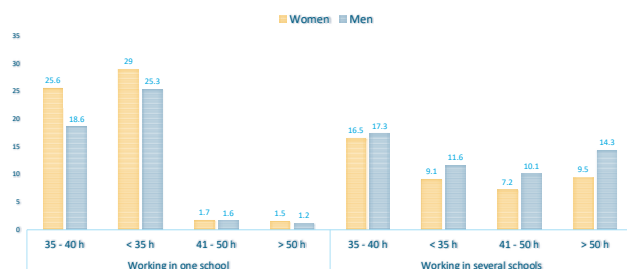
2) Independent variable: 'Dummy variable' combining multiple job holding and weekly paid working hours.

Reference category:
Working in one school
35 to 40 weekly hours

	Working in one school	Working in several schools
35 – 40 h	0 0	1 0
< 35 h	0 1	1 1
41 – 50 h	0 2	1 2
> 50 h	0 3	1 3

RESULTS

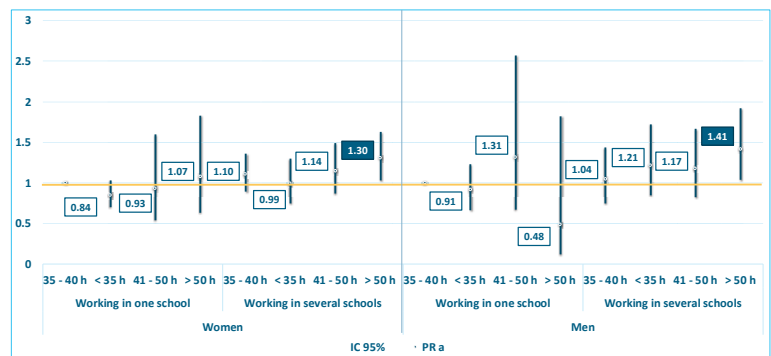
Figure 1. Distribution of the sample of Brazilian basic education teachers according to weekly paid working hours and number of schools in which they worked, by gender. The EDUCATEL study, Brazil, 2015-2016.



- Women had overall higher prevalence of sickness absence than men.
- Among both sexes, the highest prevalence of work absence due to health problems were found among teachers working > 50h in more than one school (sickness absence: 64% in women and 57% in men; medically certified sickness absence: 28% in women and 25% in men).
- The **association** between long weekly working hours and sickness absence was only significant among **teachers working in several schools**.

- Women working standard hours (35-40 h) and men working moderately long weekly hours (41-50 h) were more likely to have sickness absence.
- Working very long weekly hours (>50 h)** was positively associated with both sickness absence and **medically certified sickness absence** among both women and men **working in several schools**.

Figure 2. Adjusted association (PRa and 95%CI) of the joint effect of weekly paid working hours and multiple job holding on medically certified sickness absence among basic education teachers, by sex. The EDUCATEL study, Brazil, 2015-2016.



CONCLUSIONS

- In Brazil, working long hours in several schools might be a risk factor for being absent for work due to health problems. Sickness absence is a key indicator of poor health.
- Teacher's exclusive dedication to one school improves the student's educational attainment.
- Future actions to ameliorate the working and employment conditions of basic education teachers in Brazil are needed.