

*Health impacts of work-related geographical mobility
among precariously employed immigrants in Toronto*

<http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/>

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Background

- Precarious employment refers to work that is temporary, insecure, unpredictable, poorly paid or unprotected.
- Precarious employment is on the rise. A recent study by Lewchuk found that half of GTA and Hamilton workers were in precarious jobs.

Background

- We know that precarious employment has material, social and health consequences for workers and their families.
- The impact on geographical mobility, however, has not been given much attention.

Objective

- To examine the relationship between precarious employment and geographical mobility among immigrant workers in Toronto.

Methods

- Community-based study with Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services.
- We recruited for interviews 23 immigrants who were currently unemployed or precariously employed.
- We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews.
- Interviews were transcribed. Transcripts were coded and analyzed using NVivo.

Results – Demographic characteristics

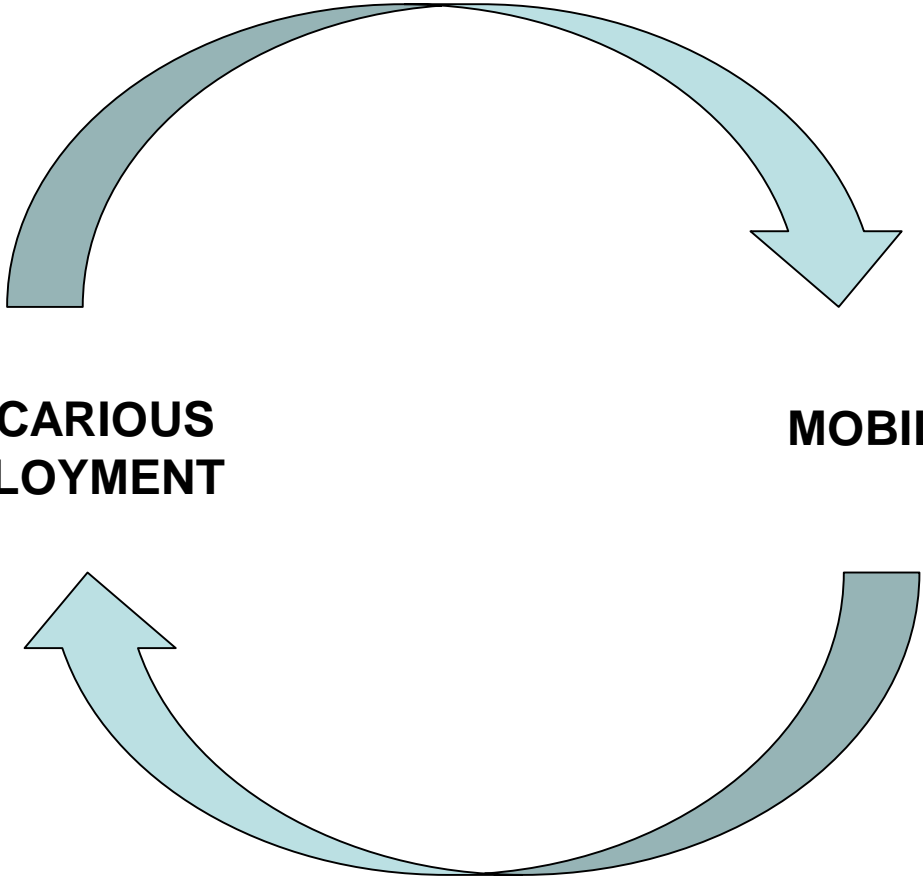
- Participants were from Bangladesh (30%), China (30%), as well as other countries.
- Most participants were between 31-50 of age (65%).
- A plurality of participants made less than \$10,000/year (30%).
- 82% had a university degree.
- 22% < 5 years in Canada; 61% > 5 years in Canada.
- 74% of participants were married and 61% had children.

Precarious employment

- Participants' work was characterized by involuntary part-time work, casual work, temporary/contract work, on-call work, and multiple jobs.
- 10/23 participants were currently unemployed.

**PRECARIOUS
EMPLOYMENT**

MOBILITY



Mobility → Employment → Health

“The problem is how to go there...for my interview. ...in this Access Alliance...they gave us a card for Loblaw’s. Maybe it was \$15 \$20. And I ask another a friend can you buy me this card...I want for tickets but I feel ashamed...with this I bought the ticket and then I can go for my interview.”

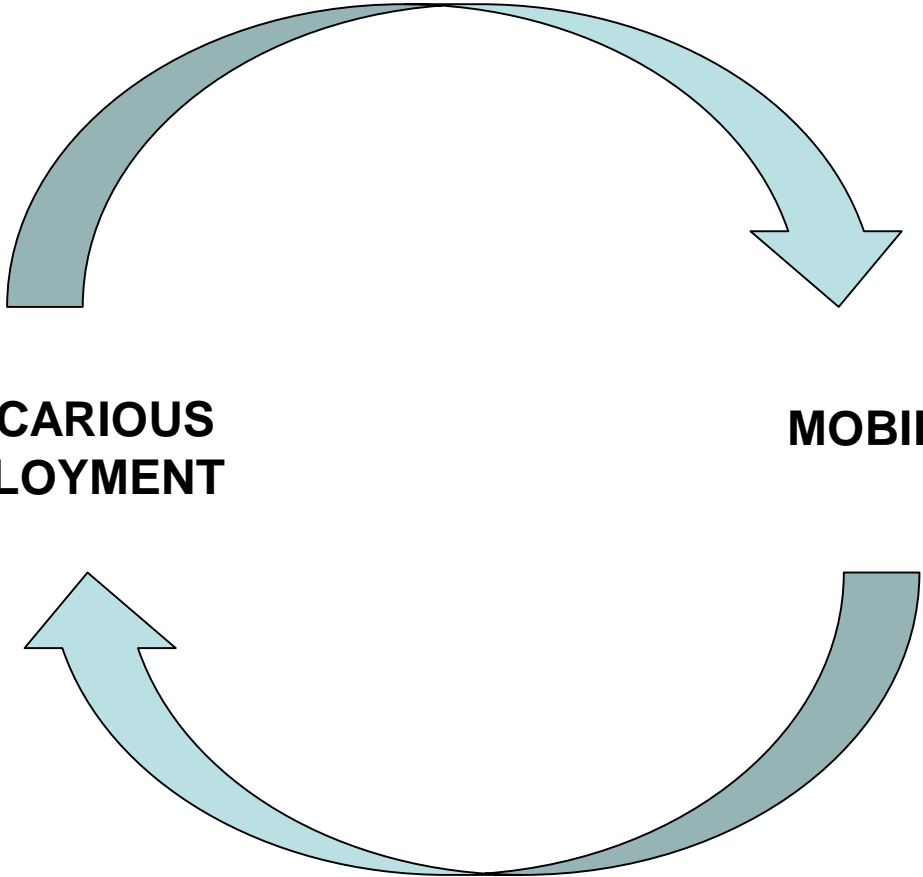
Maria

“I get stressed. If I not get the TTC on time (yeah) my body is shaking sometimes scared that my supervisor talk with me very rudely. I am not ok with this behavior then I am scared.”

Natalia

**PRECARIOUS
EMPLOYMENT**

MOBILITY



Employment → Mobility → Health

1. Extended travel (time and distance)

“Tired. Commuting tire you out because if you’re commuting 3 hours a day because at one point I was. When you get to work you’re tired and by Wednesday you’re pooped. It will affect your performance.”

Chun

“And he, that job, that type of job is 12 hour shift. So how can he sleep? It’s two hours and back home two hours.”

Carine

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

1. Extended travel (time and distance)

“That time I think I feel sorry for her. For me that is not a problem. It is part of my work. I am spending my time to go and come back. But for her I think maybe bad that she’s waiting, she’s feeling hungry after school. She’s waiting in the library. And there is another problem suppose I didn't mention that one. In the Tim Horton we are not allowed to keep our phone.”

Chun

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

2. Travel to different locations

“It means I don’t have time to stop and drink water. I don’t have time to eat a meal...you can’t eat because I have to rush from here to here. So you can’t stop and take a bite so a lot of these I, I don’t eat yeah or drink water.”

Steven

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

3. Travel at night and/or to isolated or unfamiliar locations

“Sunday I start at 9 (pm). This is a big problem...I need to walk a long way alone. Sometimes I requested my husband to help me to go there. At that time I lock my daughter at home alone. She is sleeping like this and at the morning my husband was waiting for me at that stop.”

Lisa

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

4. Transportation costs

“That’s why there’s this paranoia to save whatever tokens you can to put away. Like from the time I accumulate rent money I put that one aside because you know have to sleep somewhere right. And then like if I have to go without food I can probably go without food but I need the rent money there until I can probably get another \$20 and I can buy something to eat.”

Alim

Employment  **Mobility**  **Health**

4. Transportation costs (strategies to save \$)

“I remember one night I was walking one night I was frost bitten. My finger was and for two nights in a row when I go to bed at night my finger would hurt because I got frost bitten when I was walking that 40 minutes. I had on the gloves but the gloves wasn’t warm enough.”

May

Conclusions

- **This study highlights the reciprocal relationship between mobility and precarious employment, and the impact on health.**
- **Health impacts of precarious employment combine with health impacts of mobility to negatively impact workers and their families.**
- **Policy options...Example of discount transit pass.**

Questions?

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