

**Clarke, Heather, and Kara Arnold. (2014). "Employee Health and Well-Being Implications of the Fly-in Fly-out Employment Model." Administrative Sciences Association of Canada Conference. Muskoka, ON. May 9-13, 2014.**

# **Employee health and well-being implications of the fly-in/fly-out employment model**

Heather M. Clarke  
Memorial University

Kara A. Arnold  
Memorial University

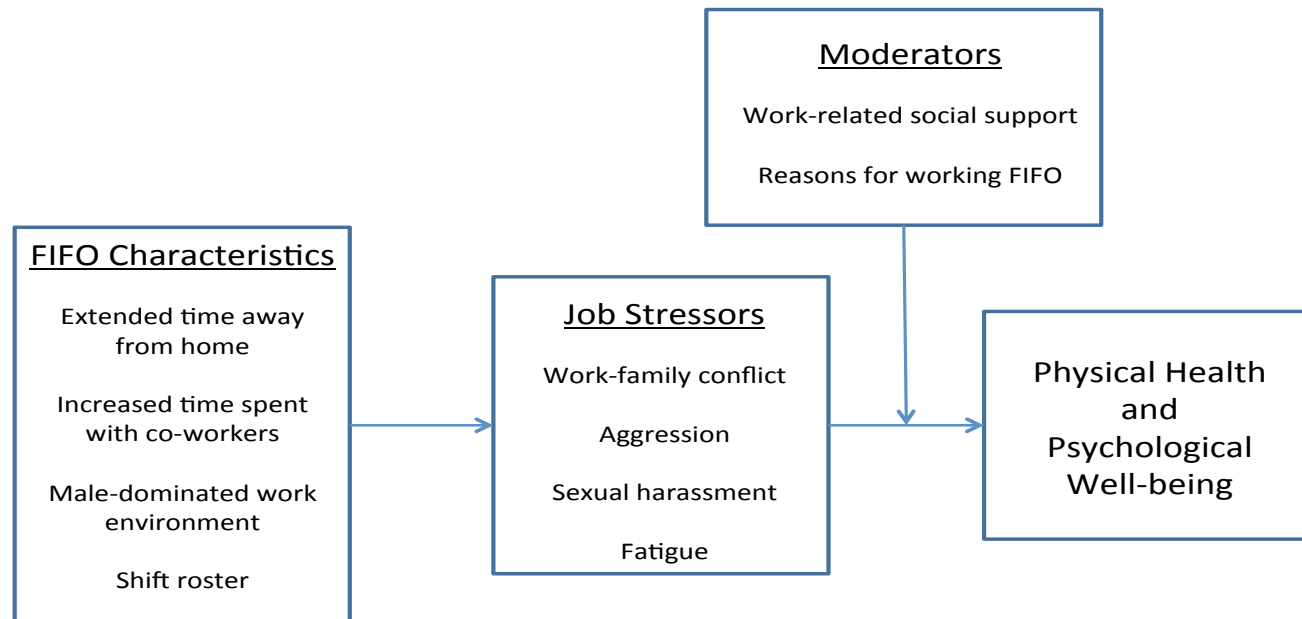
# Background

- In remote areas, the Fly-in/Fly-out (FIFO) employment model is now standard for resource development (*Storey, 2010, p. 1161*)
- Defined as: operations “which involve work in relatively remote locations where food and lodging accommodation is provided for workers at the work site” (*Storey, 2001, p.135*)
- Use continues to rise in extractive industries (*Ritter, 2001; Shrimpton & Storey, 1996*)

# Sustainability

- Research on FIFO and sustainably has largely investigated the impact of FIFO operations on community sustainability (*e.g. Storey, 2001; 2010*)
- We argue that employee health and well-being should be considered more explicitly when assessing sustainability
- Conceptual model describes why FIFO could be associated with decreased employee well-being and factors that might moderate this relationship

# Conceptual Model



- Work-family conflict:
  - ❖ “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (*Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77*)
- One study found shift roster was associated with work-family conflict such that conflict increased with longer shift rosters (consecutive days working) (*Funston, 2012*)
- Boundary management preferences may be an important consideration for FIFO employees

# Aggression

- Workplace aggression:
  - ❖ “behavior by an individual or individuals within or outside an organization that is intended to physically or psychologically harm a worker or workers and occurs within a work-related context” (*Schat & Kelloway, 2005, p. 191*)
- Alcohol consumption
- Time spent together
- Traditionally male environment

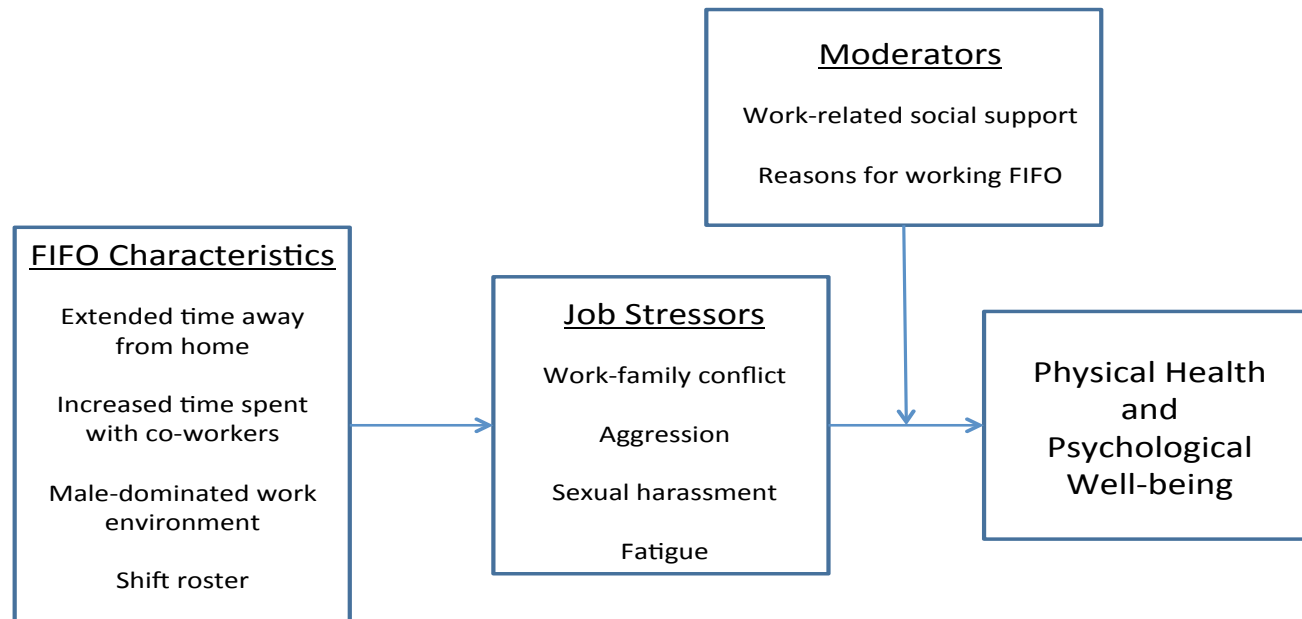
- Sexual harassment:
  - ❖ “unwanted sex-related behaviour at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being” (*Fitzgerald, Swan, & Magley, 1997, p. 20*).
- Traditionally male environment



# Fatigue

- Fatigue:
  - ❖ “a syndrome of effects resulting in impaired physical or mental performance” (*Grandjean, 1979; Muller et al., 2008, p. 63*), such as tiredness
- In Canada common for FIFO workers to work a roster of 4 to 14 consecutive 12-hour shifts (*Costa et al., 2006*)
- *All four of these stressors have been found to be associated with decreased employee well-being*

# Conceptual Model



# Work related social support

- Seeking social support is a common coping response to job stressors (*Cortina & Wasti, 2005; Folkman et al., 1986*)
  - ❖ Physical isolation from their social support system at home
  - ❖ Work sources of social support (organizational, supervisor, and co-worker) may be even more important than for standard workers
  - ❖ Research has shown that FIFO workers rely on work sources of support

# Reasons for working in FIFO

- Reasons for working affect experience of work (e.g., Dupré, Inness, Connelly, Barling, & Hopton, 2006)
  - ❖ Negative experiences at work are more detrimental for those compelled to stay in a job for financial reasons or lack of job mobility (e.g. Dupré et al., 2006; Inness, Barling, & Turner, 2005; Tepper, 2000)
  - ❖ Expect many FIFO employees may feel unable to leave due to financial reasons and lack of mobility

# Future Research

- A sustainable organization “contributes to sustainable development by delivering simultaneously economic, social, and environmental benefits – the so-called triple bottom line” (*Hart & Milstein, 2003, p. 56*)
- Employees are primary stakeholders and their health and well-being is an element of social sustainability
- Future research testing the propositions in the model and investigating the effect of FIFO on employee health

# Thank you!

## Questions?